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English Men of Action

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MAJOR-GENERAL WELLESLEY, afterwards DUKE OF WELLINGTON

From a painting by ROBERT HOME (1806)

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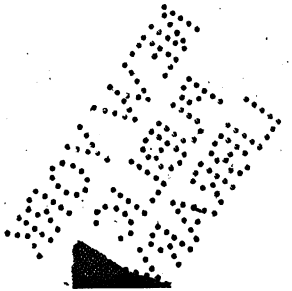
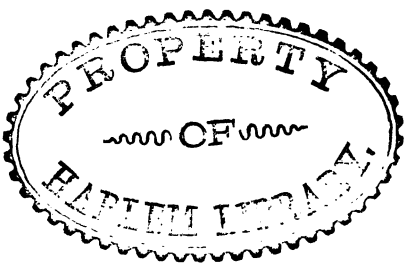


WELLINGTON

BY

GEORGE HOOPER



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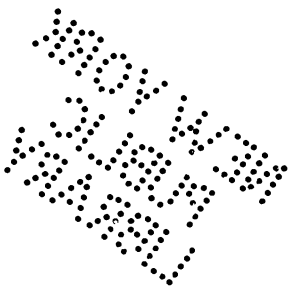

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WELLINGTON

CHAPTER I

ARTHUR WESLEY

SOMETIME in the spring of 1769, either in April or May, at Dublin or in Dangan Castle, County Meath, the boy was born whose name became, and is, familiar and famous to all the world—Wellington. His father was Garret, Earl of Mornington, a lover and composer of music; his mother was Anne Hill, a daughter of Lord Dungannon; he was christened Arthur, and he had three brothers who were men of mark in their day. The family name of his house, then Wesley, was afterwards transformed into Wellesley, which is described as the ancient spelling; but if one of that family came from Somerset, the spelling in the reign of Edward the First was Wellesleigh—Richard de Wellesleigh being set down in Rymer as the leader of a body of levies who took part in the Scottish wars. According to Mr. Gleig, Arthur was descended from a man of English stock, Walter Colley or Cowley, who migrated in the fifteenth century from Rutlandshire to Ireland. His surname he derived from the Wesleys, also ancient settlers therein, his grandfather, Richard Colley, having acquired that name

by adoption into the Wesley family. As Lady Mornington always insisted that her son Arthur was born on May-Day, 1769, and as Arthur himself kept that as his birthday, we may reasonably accept it, although his baptismal certificate is dated the 30th, and an election committee of the Irish House of Commons decided that he must have been born before April 29th; but the committee's decision cannot be regarded as trustworthy evidence. Let the Duke's birthday stand as May 1st, just as that of the young Corsican, Bonaparte, who was named Napoleon, is now allotted to August 15th in the same year, despite surviving doubts whether it was on that or on another day that his mother, the beautiful Lætitia, hurried from church to give the world a conqueror. The curious traveller and the political enthusiast visit the Casa Bonaparte, in Ajaccio, the well-spring of a grand realistic romance. Wellington has no shrine; and we must be content to know that he was an Irishman sprung from an English stock, whose birth-place and birthday neither the Duke nor any member of his family "treated as worthy of a moment's consideration." Indifference to non-essentials is one note of Wellington's career, throughout which the theatrical and legendary element was conspicuous by its absence. But it was not wanting in romance; for, as we shall see, "the dunce of the family" came to be the victor of Assaye, Vittoria, and Waterloo.

The incidents of his childhood and youth are only faintly indicated in the traditions which remain. We are told that his mother had no fondness for her son Arthur; Mr. Gleig says that her feeling towards him was "not far removed from aversion"; and thus he had not

much home-life after he had passed out of the nursery. Certain it is that he rarely alluded to his early days, and the conduct attributed to Lady Mornington may account for his perfunctory visits to her when he was "the Duke," which made Mr. Greville, who could know nothing of the facts, write him down a hard man. At some time, then, he was placed in a school at Chelsea, whence, for a brief period, he went to Eton. In neither did he shine, and it has been often said that, in after years, when Eton was proud of him, nothing could be remembered to his credit or discredit except that he fought a battle with "Bobus" Smith, the brother of the witty Canon of St. Paul's. From Eton he was sent to a French military school, England, according to her wont, having none of her own, and no military institutions of any sort, nothing but makeshifts for institutions. The French school selected for Arthur Wesley was at Angers on the Maine. Mr. Raikes was told by General Sir A. Mackenzie that the school was much frequented by young Englishmen, because the Governor, the Marquis de Pignerol, an Engineer, looked after their studies, and also because his brother had a fine riding-school. The General remembered the young Arthur, but all he could say was that the boy was rather weak in health, "not very attentive to his studies, and constantly occupied with a little terrier called Vick, which followed him everywhere." A more definite glimpse of the student than that we cannot get: it is as vague as the boxing-match at Eton; but it enables us to picture the slim bright-eyed boy, idling in the streets of the picturesque old town, or playing with "Vick" on the steep cliffs which rise out of the water just below the confluence of

three streams. Did he read *King John*, or the *Memoirs of Richelieu*, or try to comprehend on the spot the foolish fight at the Pont de Cé, down on the Loire? He dined with the neighbouring great folks, met Siéyès and de Jaucourt, and acquired some knowledge of the French tongue which served him well in after life. It is not on record when he went to Angers nor how long he stayed there—he said, himself, "a year, perhaps"; nor when he quitted the school, so dim it all is; but General Mackenzie told Mr. Raikes that they left Angers together, and drove into Paris, "in a broken *cabriolet de poste*," and that "they put up at a mean sort of inn near the Palais Royal," probably towards the end of 1786, for in 1787 Arthur Wesley became an ensign in the Seventy-third Foot, the first fixed date in his story subsequent to the year of his birth.

His elder brother Richard, Earl of Mornington since his father's death in 1781, and a shining academic scholar, watched over the lad and pushed him along. Political and social influences went for much then, whatever they do now, and the ensign soon appeared as a lieutenant of the Seventy-sixth and Forty-first, a subaltern in the Twelfth Light Dragoons, and next as a captain in the Fifty-eighth Foot, and then as captain in the Eighteenth Light Dragoons, all between 1787 and 1792. Nor did the shifting process end there, for he first got a majority, and then, by purchase, the lieutenant-colonelcy of the Thirty-third in the autumn of 1793. It was his brother who helped him to the money which made the last step feasible; the brother who probably knew his capacity when it was invisible to others, and whose insight was amply justified.

Thus Arthur had the command of a battalion at twenty-four; but he was beaten in that line by Stapleton Cotton, whose family influence placed him, in 1794, when he was twenty-one, at the head of the Twenty-fifth Light Dragoons. Wealth and interest were nearly all-powerful; it was the palmy day of purchase which George the Third had tried and had failed to abolish, and, until the Duke of York became Commander-in-Chief, infants of both sexes figured in the army-list as the holders of commissions.

Before he had blossomed into a battalion-commander the Viceroy of Ireland, Lord Westmoreland, put him on his staff, and his successor, Lord Camden, retained him as an aide-de-camp. He also entered the Irish House of Commons, sitting for the borough of Trim, and it was on this occasion that a committee had to decide whether or not, in April, 1790, he had attained his majority. They seated him, but their report cannot be accepted as evidence of his age, for party knew no scruples. Neither the Vice-regal Court nor the Parliament House were highly moral schools. One was profligate and the other corrupt, but his subsequent career showed that the young soldier took no harm from either. How he behaved under temptations common to all and resistless for many is not authentically recorded, and we have to infer it from the fruits borne by the tree in riper years. Stories are told of extravagance and debt, and of loans advanced by tradesmen which enabled the young soldier to go abroad on foreign service. They may be true; though why it should be thought astonishing that a younger son in a semi-royal court could not live on his pay, and why drapers and shoemakers should not lend money as

well as bankers and bill-discounters, has never been made clear. In after years the Duke of Wellington said that he never got into debt, which cannot mean that he always paid ready money; and the Dublin anecdotes, which are very vague, refer probably to nothing more than the stress on the pocket caused by a summons to embark for the West Indies or the Low Countries. The one fact about him which is indubitable is that he was cheerful and had many friends, and that he wooed and won Lady Charlotte Pakenham, daughter of Lord Longford; that when her parents refused their consent to the match, the two young folks sighed and obeyed, like Gibbon, yet, unlike him, their affections endured the trial of discouragement and absence; so that when, ten years afterwards, the little aide-de-camp returned from India as a Major-General and a victor in great battles, the Lord and Lady Longford discovered that he was a prize, and the faithful lovers were rewarded for their constancy. The truth is that the Dublin folks did not, or could not, look below the surface, and that the essential qualities of the young soldier were precisely those which courtiers and politicians are the least likely to discern. He was dull, so they thought, because he had not the superficial glitter and precocity, the conventional hall-marks which common minds often regard as signs of talent or genius. He was the "ugly duckling," whose brilliant transformation is such a source of astonishment and perplexity to the ordinary run of mankind.

The butterfly period of his life, when he had to hover in attendance on the Viceroy, ended with his promotion to the command of the Thirty-third Foot in September, 1793. Here we come upon a fact which illustrates the

character of the young colonel, and is certainly a note of promise. For he took up his work as a leader of men in earnest, and proved at once that, while apparently idle and frivolous, he had not wasted his time. So steadily did he apply himself to the task of working his regiment up to the highest attainable point, that in a few months it was officially declared to be the best-drilled and most efficient within the limits of the Irish command. The reason, of course, was that Lieutenant-Colonel Wesley not only directed the work but saw that it was done. This labour was the first piece of hard practical duty he had to perform, and the result gives a clue to his life-work, which in all he undertook was thorough. The quality of the man came out when the touchstone was applied, and only required a larger field and a tougher task to produce still more surprises.

While he was drilling the Thirty-third, the youthful genius who signed himself, at that date, "Buonaparte," was engaged in wresting Toulon from the Royalists and the English upon a plan which he had the courage to tell the Minister of War was the only practicable plan, a truth which, luckily for them, the Committee of Public Safety recognised. It is instructive now to read even the names of some of the batteries—the "Breechless," the "Fearless Men," the "Mountain," the "Convention"—to learn from him who was to become Napoleon, that General Dugommier fought with truly "republican" courage, and that his business-like and indefatigable eulogist was constructing improved furnaces for the heating of red-hot shot, wherewith to burn up "the ships of the despots." But it was the correct tone and language. Whatever his words might be at one epoch or another, the future

Emperor was just as much in earnest and as thorough-going as the colonel of the Thirty-third Foot. The French Revolution, which prepared a field for both during that winter of 1793-94, had brought forth the Reign of Terror, and was displaying its wickedness within and its vast strength without. Young France had "risen against tyrants," and old Europe had risen against France. Ever since the beginning of 1793 warfare, in which England took part, had raged in the Low Countries, at first with a show of vigour and success, which later was impaired, then ruined by inaptitude and selfishness. The memorable siege of Toulon, with its result, was only one among many reverses endured by the Allies, nor can it be said that they were undeserved. By the end of the year the invading armies of the first coalition were all thwarted and compelled to retire, and during the next young France broke over the frontier in fiery torrents which could not be withstood. The bearing of the English troops under the Duke of York was worthy of their ancient renown, but they shared in the general disaster, and were obliged to retreat before the republican hosts. The summer months of 1794 saw, indeed, the downfall of Robespierre and the "glorious 1st of June," but they also saw the English army thrust back as far as Antwerp, and the whole line of the Allies thrust back everywhere from the Pyrenees to the mouth of the Scheldt.

Sometime in May, probably before the Allies had been beaten at Turcoing, the English Government projected one of those expeditions to the coast of France which young Bonaparte, a year later, spoke of with such scorn. Lord Moira was to make a descent upon

Brittany, and the Thirty-third was included in the corps destined for that operation. Arthur Wesley at once resigned his seat and hastened to Cork, where he joined his regiment. But the deplorable intelligence from Belgium showed the Government that succour must be sent promptly to the Duke of York, and Lord Moira embarked his battalions for Ostend. Yet so swiftly ran the stream of French success that he had only just time to land the greater part of his troops, and to hurry out of Ostend on the road to Malines as the French were pouring in from the other side. The Thirty-third did not march with the main body, but went by sea to Antwerp, where, beaten at Oudenarde, the Duke and his army soon arrived. At this moment the Allies were cut in two by the French armies, the Austrians having retreated over the Meuse by Maestricht, and the English having taken the road to Holland. Thenceforward they had no alternative but retreat, and Wesley's first active service was rendered in a British army marching away from its foes.

First the Duke moved from Antwerp upon Breda, but unable to remain there, lest he should be turned, he fell back still farther, trusting that he might be able to pass the Meuse near Grave, and thus retain his connection with Germany. Had the Dutch people been friendly, he might have tried to defend Holland, but their sympathies were with the French and the Revolution, and consequently safety alone lay in a northward march. To cover the columns heading for the Meuse he placed a rear-guard of Hessians in Boxtel, a village on the Dommel; but on September 14th Pichegru's Frenchmen forded the stream, broke into the village, and cut up the detachment. The Duke, who was then

at Uden on the Aa, sent General Abercrombie with the Guards, four Line regiments, a complement of horse, and some guns, to retake Boxtel. They marched in the night, and sighted the position at dawn only to find the enemy on the alert and in great force. Abercrombie judged that it would be well not to attack, yet did not so decide until part of his troops were engaged. In fact the Guards company in advance lost men and prisoners, and in the retreat there was some confusion in a lane, where a light dragoon regiment mixed themselves up with the infantry. Throughout the morning the Thirty-third were in support, and at this critical moment were well handled, for Colonel Wesley noting the entanglement, and seeing the enemy's horse preparing to charge, drew up his battalion across the outlet from the lane, leaving an opening for the retreating crowd. Then, when they had got clear, he wheeled the centre companies into line to fill the gap, and the Thirty-third opening a steady fire upon the pursuers, slew and wounded many and brought the pursuit to an end. It was a trifling incident in war, but important to us, because the skirmish near Boxtel was Wesley's first engagement, and because his coolness and promptitude attracted the notice of Dundas, a shining light in the world of tactics and parade manœuvres. The French halted on the Aa, and the Duke of York, crossing the Meuse at Grave, next placed the Waal, one branch of the Rhine, between him and his foes. He could not stay even there, but was obliged to recede over the next channel of the Rhine at Arnheim. There he quitted the army to assume the post of Commander-in-Chief in England, and Count Walmoden led the much-tried troops ever northward until they reached Bremen

and the British transports. This retreat was made in winter weather of unusual severity, so that the troops endured great privations, fatigues, and miseries. But they persisted, despite the ice and snow, and attained the ships in the spring. What we have to note is that Colonel Wesley was selected to command the rear-guard, and faithfully accomplished the arduous task. To him the escape seemed miraculous. In after years, says Mr. Gleig, he used to describe how the army was conducted. "If we happened to be at dinner and the wine was going round, it was considered wrong to interrupt us. I have seen a packet handed in from the Austrian head-quarters and thrown aside unopened, with a remark, 'That will keep till to-morrow morning.' It has always been a marvel to me how any one of us escaped." But the lesson struck deep into that young observant mind, and bore fruit in after years. Bonaparte, in like manner, writing to the Committee of Public Safety towards the end of 1793, described the staff before Toulon as a "*tas d'ignorants*" who did not understand their trade. The business of warfare had to be learnt by both sides in the exacting school of experience; because, as the precocious young Corsican said, "three-fourths of mankind never concern themselves with what is necessary until they feel the want of it, and then it is too late." Yet the French had one great advantage, which has not escaped the keen eye of Sir Edward Hamley. They had the heritage of regular systematic training given in the camps of instruction under the old *régime*, when the new methods were devised and taught which enabled the Republican levies to prevail over the old tactics. The costly lesson is as old as the world, but there are nations which still

have to learn that Bacon's maxim—"not to advance is to go back"—applies to nothing so strictly as it does to military institutions and the conduct of war.

The commander of the Thirty-third brought back his regiment to England in the spring of 1795; we can imagine in what meditative frame of mind. War, he knew, was a most serious business, one on the management of which not only the lives and limbs of men, but the fortunes of kingdoms, were put to hazard. Yet how strangely had he seen it conducted—so conducted, indeed, that escape from the supreme risks involved seemed miraculous. It ran counter to all his ideas of exactitude, vigilance, foresight, and thoroughness. The facts of that campaign in Belgium and Holland left an ineradicable impression, out of which grew grave and earnest meditations which bore unexpected fruit. Wesley, on leave of absence being obtained, went to his home at Trim. He must have thought over the condition of his profession in Britain, and wondered to himself whether it were a wise man's part to follow the career of arms. That is evident from the letter which, after consulting his brother Lord Mornington, he wrote to Lord Camden, the Viceroy, in June 1795. Fresh from a campaign in which he, at least, had won some credit by faithful service, he asked humbly for a place in some civil department, the Revenue or Treasury Board by preference, but declared his willingness to accept the Viceroy's decision. "You will be surprised," he wrote, "at my desiring a civil instead of a military office. It certainly is a departure from the line which I prefer, but I see the manner in which military offices are filled, and I don't wish to ask you for that which I know you cannot give me." The

source of this remarkable attempt to quit the army may be clearly traced to his disgust at the mode in which it was managed, and the small prospect of any effective change for the better. His application must be regarded by the light he himself sheds upon that period of his life, when he described the slovenly mode of conducting war which marked the campaign of '94-'95. If circumstances, he is reported to have said, had not made him a soldier, having the gift of rapid and correct calculation, he would probably have become distinguished in public life as a financier. Nothing is more probable; but Lord Camden did not comply with his request, and his pre-eminent business faculty remained for use where it was so greatly needed. Still, for a time at least, he ran the risk of dying of yellow fever. After a brief sojourn in Ireland he was ordered to join his regiment, which had been selected to form part of an expedition to the West Indies. He and they embarked, but the autumn winds were adverse, and after striving for six weeks to get out of the Channel, the squadron of transports and men of war sought rest and safety in the waters whence they started at Spithead. He led his regiment to Poole in January 1796, and while there he became so ill that when the Thirty-third was ordered this time to the East Indies, the Colonel, unfit to embark, was compelled to remain. But he secured a passage in a swift man-of-war, and overtook the transports at the Cape. His destination was Calcutta; and the change wrought by science in navigation is brought home to the modern traveller when he is told that the Thirty-third and its commander did not land in the capital of Bengal until February 1797.

Arthur Wesley was now in his twenty-eighth year. He had been obscure as a neglected schoolboy, unmarked as a military student on the Maine, supposed to be an idler as an aide-de-camp, and nearly silent as a Member of Parliament. For never in his life was he in the least self-advertising. Probably few except his brothers, especially Richard, guessed what sterling qualities lurked under the surface, or knew how much he worked in his own way, how quietly he filled his mind with really useful knowledge, and pondered gravely upon men and things. When the test was applied, and he had a distinct duty to perform, he at once excelled in the doing of it, and the young colonel made a model regiment. When he had to face the enemy and beat him, he was equal to the exigency; and as soon as he became famous it was remembered how finely he covered a horrible retreat with his weak rear-guard. Some, at the moment, saw his soldierly merits, or he would not have been selected to do what was urgently needed. As a matter of course, when the work was done, he sank into the ruck of colonels, but only to emerge a victorious general on the plains of India.

CHAPTER II

WELLESLEY'S EARLY INDIAN SERVICES

ARTHUR WESLEY, or Wellesley, as his name shall now be written, for he soon followed the usage of his family in adopting that spelling, arrived in India at an important moment. The great administration of Lord Cornwallis had been followed by that of Sir John Shore, which, though useful, cannot be called great, and soon after the Colonel landed, Shore, with the title of Lord Teignmouth, set sail for England. There was an interval of some weeks, during which period Lord Hobart was acting Governor-General, and then came Richard, Lord Mornington, the brilliant scholar and tried administrator, who was destined to leave a broad mark on British policy in India, to extend the frontiers and augment the power of the Company, and stamp the name of Marquess Wellesley upon the pages of its astonishing history. It was the union of the two brothers, in council and on the field, which imparted such solidity and lustre to those eventful years; for although the younger was conspicuous as a Man of Action, he was also a sagacious statesman, and known to be so by the large-minded and enterprising Viceroy.

Some have thought and said that a change came over Arthur Wellesley in 1797. It is not so; the unity of his

character is complete from the beginning to the end. The faculties he possessed came with him when he was born, and remained neither more nor less. Like the rest of us, great and little, he could cultivate, he could not add to them; and the peculiarity in his case is that he cultivated them in a manner different from that of other men. Lord Mornington was distinguished at school and college because he stood the accepted tests; Arthur could not be distinguished, that is, recognised, because he took his own way, to which none of the received tests applied. Intrinsically, as the result showed, he was just as able—that is, he could do as much and even say as much, if the substantial sense be regarded, as his eloquent and polished brother. Arthur had acquired and assimilated the knowledge of things that would be useful to him, and had trained his judgment; but the things were not those which would have won him a high place in a class-list, and the judgment he developed was essentially practical. In his voluminous writings one looks in vain for a spark of imagination; yet the quality must have been in his mind, for without a powerful imagination no man can be a great general. In him it worked upon facts, and he called it a gift of rapid and accurate calculation. He had passed his life, he once said to Croker, in trying to see what was "on the other side of a hill," and a vivid as well as sober imagination is essential to the accomplishment of that feat in peace as well as in war. His was not the oratorical and literary mode of demonstration; and, because he had not the current coin of culture, he was supposed to be poor in capacity and dull in mind. The mistake was natural and inevitable at the time, but it is now without

excuse. He had, and proved that he had, when tried, an inborn wealth of nature, an immense stock of useful practical knowledge, and a solid judgment which no man can obtain by mere exercise of will. They came out for use as soon as he got a command in Ireland; they were visible to his comrades in Holland under the ordeal of a painful and desperate retreat; and they soon became conspicuous to men on the large and hazardous field of Southern India. The man did not change; he remained the same; but he found much arduous work to be done, and he did it with a vigour and thoroughness which prove how great were his capacities, and how well he was prepared, although his mode of preparation, his mental and moral culture, had not received the conventional stamp. It may be said of him, as much as of any man, that he was self-made; but it must also be added that the happy advent of his brother as the King's representative and the Company's chief servant gave him the opportunity at this early period of disclosing his worth as an administrator, a statesman, and a soldier. That was the gift of Fortune; the rest he supplied from his own stores.

The proof is to be found in his published writings. It is plain from them that he went fully armed for his work, that he took a large view of it, and that he fell upon it with the quiet, unflagging industry which marked his whole career. Although there are no records of his Angers school-days and few glimpses of his Dublin life, it is impossible to believe that the climate of the Ganges Valley gave him suddenly a great intellect, a piercing insight, a matured judgment, and the power of steady application. That he was

recognised as a man of ability may be inferred from the fact that within two months of his landing he was consulted by General St. Leger on a project for establishing light artillery, and was nominated to command an expedition against the Manilla Islands. If his observations upon the artillery question are now out of date, seeing that horse-artillery batteries have long been established in India, they were sensible and practical when made; for in 1797 it was utterly impracticable to find horses in numbers sufficient to supply the loss and waste. But his suggestion that a beginning should be made on a small scale is characteristic. Not less so is the request which he preferred to the government that the chief command should be given to another officer, while at the same time he says in a letter to his brother that if the offer were repeated he would accept it, "taking the chance that the large force they intend to send, the known pusillanimity of the enemy, and my exertions, will compensate in some degree for my want of experience." Steady in upholding his rights, he never pushed himself forward; but that did not prevent him from stating his opinions firmly on all occasions, and it is easy to see now the weight which they must have carried. The Manilla command fell to Colonel Wellesley, but the troops did not embark until August, and were recalled in September, when they had got no farther than Penang on the Malay Peninsula. The expedition is, however, so far remarkable that it caused the thoughtful young commander to compose a series of "regimental orders for on board ship," which even now may be read with profit; and led him to write a memorandum on "Pulo Penang," showing how thoroughly he dealt with

the subject, not merely or mainly in its military aspects, as might have been expected, but in its relation to and bearing upon commerce. Another paper, written about the same time, "On Bengal," puts in a still stronger light the economic tendencies of the man who, if he had not been a soldier, would have been a financier. The comments and arguments have now only a historical importance, but they exhibit him as a pleader for less interference with the freedom of trade than that which subsisted, and they show the far-reaching nature of his youthful speculations.

The personal apart from the speculative view of him is disclosed in some of his letters. There is now and then a touch of sarcasm, even at this early period, not of the flighty, but rather the grim kind. Thus, after telling Lord Mornington that Sir John Shore had made a kind of agreement with "the Nabob" of Oude, the Colonel assumes that it will not be observed, "as it seems a rule of policy here," he adds, "never to give assistance to your friend when he stands most in need of it, and always to break your treaty with him at the moment when it would be most convenient to him that you should fulfil its stipulations"—a hit intended to strike both sides. He complained that the Medical Board had transferred the care of the sick on board ship to the surgeons, and among other things he described it as depriving him of that part of the superintendence over his corps which was most gratifying to him, one in which he could render the greatest service to his soldiers. Another grievance was that the troops were to be placed under the command of the ship's captain, but he sent in such a spirited remonstrance

that Sir John Shore at once revoked the foolish order. In writing to his brother concerning the French in India, the Colonel says that as long as they have an establishment in the Mauritius, "Great Britain cannot call herself safe in India." They will come here, he insists, seek service in the armies of the Native Princes, and soon "discipline their numerous armies in the *new mode* which they have adopted in Europe, than which nothing can be more formidable to the small body of fighting men of which the Company's armies in general consist;" so that, as he afterwards put it, the question was even then whether the French or we shall be masters in the Deccan. The new mode of fighting he had seen and knew its power, but it did not make him alter his own. From the same source we learn that after a year's experience he thought India a miserable country to live in, and that he had formed an opinion of the natives not at all favourable to them, and far too sweeping in its denunciations. The Hindoos were bad, but the Moslems were worse, and they were all "atrociously cruel." Their "meekness and mildness" did not exist, but they stood in awe of Europeans. As to perjury, there was more of that in Calcutta alone than "in all Europe taken together." Harsh judgments which time might or might not have modified; but bad as India was he hoped his brother would become Governor-General, a hope then about to be fulfilled, for a fortnight after expressing it news came to hand that his wish would be gratified. It was then, as he was on the point of sailing for Penang, that he wrote, "I shall be happy to be of service to you in your government;" adding, apparently in reply to some fraternal remark

in Lord Mornington's letter, "but such are the rules respecting the disposal of all patronage in the country that I can't expect to derive any advantage from it which I should not obtain if any other person were Governor-General"—forgetting that no one would fail to remember that he was the Governor-General's brother, an indestructible fact which helped to give his strong personal character fair-play and his genius free scope.

In the cold weather of 1797 he visited Lord Hobart at Madras. The coast was to him a new country, and as even then the eyes of men were turned towards Mysore, and they dreaded or seemed to dread a fresh irruption into the Carnatic, the colonel profited by the chance to make himself acquainted with the topography of the hills. There is no record of his excursions, but his military memoranda contain passages which prove that he inspected personally a considerable district on both sides of the main line of march to Bangalore. "When I was in the country," he wrote, "I thought that the road from Vellore to Tripatore might be shortened and removed from the frontier by carrying a line through the Agarum valley. I was informed, however, that it would want water." At that time, 1797, he went into the Barahmahal, where he found that a Colonel Read had made a fine road through this savage region by Ryacotta to the outlet on the Bangalore side. Political knowledge he could obtain at the desk, but topography, which ever had a special interest for him, was only to be studied in the saddle. He made the most of his holiday rambles, and, indeed, he always, wherever he went, almost to the end of his

life, imprinted on his retentive mind the features of any tract through which he travelled.

Colonel Wellesley returned to Calcutta, and in the first months of 1798 there were great changes in Fort St. George and Fort William. Lord Hobart went home and was succeeded for some months by General Harris. Sir John Shore embarked early in March, and Lord Mornington, after halting a fortnight at Madras, landed on May 17th in the capital of his realm. It was at the foot of a letter announcing the fact to Mr. Lushington, a high official at Fort St. George, that the colonel first signed as "Arthur Wellesley." From this time he comes more directly in contact with the grave and stirring questions of policy which pressed upon the new Governor-General, who had to handle at once the difficult problems which had been shirked by his pacific predecessor; and it was then that the coolness and judgment of the younger brother came into play.

The state of India was perplexed and perplexing. The Mahratta chiefs were the masters of Hindustan, except Oude and the Company's possessions in Bengal, and the Great Moghul existed in Delhi under the shadow of their swords. They were also the principal power in the Deccan, for the neutrality enjoined upon Sir John Shore had enabled them to defeat the over-confident Nizam at Kurdlah; but the weakness of this formidable confederacy was radical—the leaders were engaged in perpetual strife for supremacy. The other power in the Deccan, the power most dreaded, was Tippoo, Sultan of Mysore, who, although his wings had been clipped by Lord Cornwallis, was yet a constant menace to the Carnatic. He was a neighbour; he had a sea-coast

and ports through which he could and did communicate with the French; he had defeats to avenge; he was inspired by Moslem fanaticism unrestrained by the politic considerations which governed the Nizam, and he was a new man, the second and the last, as it proved, of the house which his able father, Hyder Ali, hoped to found. The European adventurer, who sought wealth and often found it in the native courts, was also a characteristic of the hour. The Savoyard, De Boigne, who was almost a genius, had disciplined a body of infantry, counted by tens of thousands, in Scindia's dominions north of the Nerbudda; and a Scotchman had helped to cast the guns, which men of several nations organised into a powerful artillery. At Hyderabad M. Raymond, a Frenchman, had formed a corps numbering fourteen thousand; and alike in Hindustan and the Deccan, soldiers of fortune followed in the steps, if none reached the eminence, of Dupleix and Bussy. The Mahratta power in the south stretched from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea, but it was enfeebled by dissensions; the two Mohammedan states, Mysore and Hyderabad, were jealous of each other; and though all desired to expel the intruders who came across the seas, experience showed that Hindoo and Moslem could not combine to effect the common wish. In the north-west the Afghan Zemaun, a feeble representative of the great Ahmed Shah, who sought to rival the victor of Paniput, could only contrive to inspire a vague dread either in Delhi or Calcutta. The young Wellesley, a cool observer, rightly judged that the invader of the Punjab would get no farther than Lahore, basing his opinion on what he called the

inutility as well as the difficulties of the enterprise. "There is no plunder to be got now;" and Zemaun's object, he thought, was only to drive farther from him those "worst of neighbours," the Sikhs.

The British settlements were a mere fringe on the edges of India. The stronghold was Bengal, with its influence stretching up the Ganges Valley into Oude on one side and Central India on the other. The Madras possessions were a strip on the coast; and Bombay held little more than its island home, and was a power only by dint of ships and treasure. But the Company, a mystery inexplicable to the native Indian mind, had the priceless advantage of political unity to compensate for geographical separateness, a unity which the firm hands of Lord Mornington wielded with irresistible power.

The people in England wished to enjoy incompatible advantages—to retain their oriental dominions, yet hold back from conquests. It could not be done. If they did not desire to advance inland, and there can be no doubt that the desire was sincere, the Native Princes passionately longed to expel the alien intruders, or bring them into subjection. Their ability to do so was limited by the impossibility of combination among inveterate rivals; yet it was always possible for two or more to form a temporary alliance which, if it did not succeed in the main object, caused disturbance and inflicted loss. Even one state, as Hyder and Tippoo had shown, could imperil the existence of Madras. A policy of quietism, therefore, incurred a maximum of risk with a minimum of security; and, as the rule of Cornwallis and Shore distinctly proved, even a policy of quietism could not be

strictly observed. Cornwallis had to war against Tippoo, and Shore felt bound to intervene in Oude and set up Saadat Ali with the strong hand.

When Lord Mornington arrived in India, he found that the nearest peril was still Mysore. He had come fresh from Europe, then ringing with French successes, and the first intelligence which greeted him was that Tippoo had just concluded an alliance with the French Governor of the Mauritius, and that a French frigate had actually landed some scores of soldiers at Mangalore, followed a few weeks later by the impressive news that Bonaparte, at the head of a large army, had invaded Egypt with the professed ulterior object of attacking India by the Red Sea route. Some exercise of the imagination is required to realise the effect produced by such startling facts at a time when news travelled slowly and was magnified by distance. Whether Bonaparte intended or not to push his enterprise, if he could, so far as India, certain it is that he spoke of seizing Egypt when he was yet in Italy, and that as soon as he got to Paris he besought the French War Office to lend him Rennel's map of Hindustan. Lord Mornington, of course, did not know facts which came to light when the *Napoleon Correspondence* was published. It was enough for him that Tippoo had sent envoys to the Mauritius, that he had sought, and that Governor Malartic in a public proclamation had promised, French assistance, which Tippoo only required to declare war against the English, and "purge India of these villains." Lord Mornington, therefore, resolved on instant war, and sent orders directing General Harris, Acting-Governor of Madras, to collect his troops and

march upon Seringapatam. He was too impetuous. The authorities were appalled at the prospect, for they had not the means of waging war; and a strong argumentative letter from Secretary Webbe, backed by the dry declaration of Adjutant-General Close that six months would be needed for preparation, effectually cooled his ardour, and "with pain and regret" he read both, and cancelled the order.

Colonel Wellesley had already given his opinion on the subject with his usual coolness. He went direct to the heart of the matter, admitted that the cause of war was sufficient, but held that the moment was inopportune. With characteristic moderation he thought it possible to save British honour without doing anything that would render war inevitable; and suggested that if explanation were demanded, Tippoo, finding that he had gained so little by the French alliance, would "deny the whole and be glad of an opportunity of getting out of the scrape." The young statesman had too good an opinion of Tippoo's common sense when he offered his pacific advice, tempered by the wise remark that "in the meantime we shall believe as much as we please, and shall be prepared against all events." Although no demand for explanation was made on Mysore at that stage, the Viceroy was resolved to strike when prepared, especially as he learned, at a later period, from the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, that they were really alarmed by the sailing of Bonaparte's expedition from Toulon and the startling proceedings in the Mauritius; and it is an instructive fact that the ruling minds in London and Calcutta, though so far apart, reached identical conclusions at precisely the same time—the

middle of June. But Lord Mornington could not act until he had ample means, and was compelled to wait six months before these could be arrayed. He employed the time in renewing relations with the Nizam, in cleverly disbanding the French disciplined battalions at Hyderabad, substituting for them Company's Sepoys, and in making a subsidiary treaty with that ruler. He now had an ally, and he trusted with reason that the chronic quarrels between the Mahrattas would keep them and their vast resources quiet.

So the summer months passed away and the cold season returned, yet still the work of preparation was going forward. Colonel Wellesley spent much of the summer in writing military and political memoranda for the use of his brother, papers which remain to show the man as he was, and how deeply he had studied the politics as well as the military topography of southern India. Scindia had practically obtained control over the Peishwah, and the question was whether the Government of India could justly attack Scindia in order to set free the nominal head of the Mahratta confederacy, and enable him to help us in the war with Tippoo. Wellesley took up the Act of Parliament, examined it thoroughly, and came to the conclusion that the Government had no right to make war on him unless he were secretly allied with Tippoo, and even then "it must be clear that the alliance exists and must not be a mere surmise"; and the upshot of his inquiries is just this: that even were Scindia to contemplate or begin hostilities against the rival Mahratta's chiefs, "the Government cannot in a new treaty (with the Peishwah) make an engagement to attack him." Then he adds this caustic remark which

illustrates the dry directness and rectitude of his understanding. "It is true," he says, "that this almost entirely annihilates the power of making treaties, but I imagine that to have been the purpose and intention of the Act of Parliament." The greatest stickler for legality could not have put the fact more forcibly; and it is all the more creditable to the young soldier because he knew that the question then was, were we or the French to have the superiority in the Deccan?

That question was partly answered by the decisive measures at Hyderabad, which ended in the shipment of the French officers for Europe; but Tippoo still remained, and the work of providing adequately against him went on apace. In August Wellesley with the Thirty-third was sent from Calcutta to Madras. The transport struck on the Saugor Reef, but happily the wind was light and she suffered little damage; but she was three weeks in sailing from the mouth of the Hooghly to Fort St. George. "Tell ——," he wrote from shipboard, "that I conceive it to be very inconsistent with the principles of the Christian religion to give people bad water," and "you may say, likewise, that a Gentile could not have done worse than give us a bottle of good rum, by way of muster (or sample), and fill the casks with the worst I ever saw. I have written to him a public letter on the subject," and let us hope that the dishonest purveyor suffered accordingly, though no penalties could be discovered which would make these rogues honest. From the effects of the bad water Wellesley and, he says, nearly every man, had dysentery, while fifteen soldiers, "as fine men as any we had," died; but that was the crime of the storekeeper at Fort William, who, to save himself trouble,

filled the casks from the foul stream off Calcutta! The army commissariat was always a matter on which Wellesley kept an eye. He had also to look out for himself. In September he asks his brother Henry to send him "some Bengal sheep, some potatoes, some smoked humps and rounds of beef;" and when it became probable that the army would take the field, he asks for a soup-tureen and dishes for twelve people. "I shall not want plates, knives, forks, nor spoons," he says, "as everybody in an Indian camp brings those articles for himself; the host finds eatables and dishes only." He is always alive to social influences, hoping that "Mornington has been introduced to the ladies of Calcutta, and that you give dinners frequently;" indeed one of the striking things in his correspondence is the fraternal anxiety he shows throughout upon all subjects affecting the reputation and prosperity of the Governor-General. But his vigilance was everywhere. We have seen how careful he was of the health of his men, especially those in the Thirty-third. Writing from Madras to the Adjutant-General at Calcutta, with that touch of irony which sometimes gives an edge to his letters, he says, "I am well acquainted with the manner in which recruits are looked after and taken care of in Fort William, and I shall, therefore, be much obliged to you if you will take measures to send them to me as soon as possible," and warn the storekeeper "not to send bad water with these recruits." A certain major had the temerity to object to his interfering with the Thirty-third when not actually under his immediate command. He reproved, but gave the officer good advice, adding, "Of this you may be certain, that however my attention

may be engaged by other objects, whenever I find it necessary I shall interfere in everything which concerns the Thirty-third." Not a safe man to contend with, especially when you are in the wrong.

Upon the great question of peace or war the younger Wellesley was persistently for peace, if it could be had; but in any case for such preparation as would enable the Government to defend the Carnatic or invade Mysore. In maintaining that position he had to battle with the advisers of Lord Clive, the new Governor of Madras, who was not so dull as he appeared to be, but unaccustomed to consider questions of the magnitude of those then before him, yet one who improved and became docile under gentle treatment. He was embarrassed also by the Military Board, that "cursed institution," but he found General Harris intelligent, reasonable, and anxious to have Lord Clive "kept in the right way." He had made friends who were to become famous—Munro and Malcolm, for example—and he described Barry Close as the ablest officer in the Company's service. With the strong help of his brother he so far triumphed over opponents as to secure attention to the abounding wants of the army, and thus fulfilled that half of his plan which concerned what we should now call mobilisation. By slow degrees, hard work, and careful management, a respectable force was collected between midsummer and Christmas. But he could not avert war. Lord Mornington intended to negotiate with Tippoo in due time. "I am very anxious," wrote Wellesley to his brother on September 19th, "to hear of the conclusion of your negotiations with the Peishwah and the Nizam, that you may make your proposition, whatever it may be, to

Tippoo as soon as possible, and that he may see that you are not bent on annihilating him;" and he counted on the display of strength in the Carnatic to render the Mysorean eager for a fair settlement. As late as October 21st he thought war should be avoided if possible, though he was, of course, ready to make it short and sharp if no other issue could be attained. That is why he urged on the local authorities; but it was a wearisome task, and made him write on the 24th, "I am heartily sick of the business and wish I was anywhere else," so discouraging is the combat with stupidity. Nevertheless he worked on, pushing forward the battering train to Vellore, collecting draught-cattle, and intent, as ever, upon supplies. He prevailed on Lord Clive to appoint a commissary of stores, and hoped he would appoint a commissary of grain and provisions. "Matters will then be brought into some shape," he writes to Henry Wellesley at the end of October, "and we shall know what we are about, instead of trusting to the vague calculations of a parcel of blockheads who know nothing and have no data." Always the spirit of the man of business is to be found in the general who is great, when not on the battlefield as well as when fired by visible strife; and that spirit animated the young soldier just as much when his military life began as when he was at the height of his career. The same indications are seen in the youthful Bonaparte. "The *sans culottes* of the South," we find him writing in November, 1793, "should have no other thought than that of purging the Republic of tyrants." Then follows the thoroughly practical conclusion: "In order to achieve so essential an end promptly, citizens, you must procure horses for the

park of artillery which is besieging Toulon." So, without any high-flown declarations, Wellesley laboured hard to collect his draught-bullocks, fill the provision and munition depots, and provide well-supplied bazaars.

Early in November Lord Mornington decided to act in a way which would bring matters to a crisis. He addressed a letter to the Sultan of Mysore, friendly in its tone and substance, but taking note in a firmly polite way of the discrepancy between Tippoo's professions of amity and his negotiations with the French. The Governor-General was able to say that the Peishwah and the Nizam concurred with him—for Hyderabad had become an ally and Poonah had been neutralised—and that he proposed to send "Major Doveton, who is well known to you," who would explain the "sole means" which the Government and its allies thought would remove distrust and suspicion and establish peace on a durable foundation. This step only produced from Tippoo a reply saying that the French, "full of vice and deceit," "the enemies of mankind," had put about reports to ruffle the minds of both governments, and glossing over the Mauritius incident. He was surprised that any allusion to war should be addressed to such a peaceful man as himself. He was, he said, "resident at home, at times taking the air, and at others amusing myself with hunting at a spot which is used as a pleasure ground;" he was content to rest on the observance of treaties, and thought, though he did not say, that Major Doveton need not trouble himself to visit Seringapatam. The answer was thus an evasion on the main point, and instinct with deceit all over; but it proved the accuracy of Arthur Wellesley's estimate that at this stage Tippoo's "grand object would

be to gain time till he could see what was going on in Egypt and Europe," though it did not confirm the earlier conjecture that he would seize the opportunity of getting out of a scrape. Practically, the question of war or peace was then decided; and strong as the case against the Mysorean looks now, it must have appeared ten times stronger to the men who were living in the heated atmosphere of '98, and who were at hand-grips with a host of enemies.

Wellesley's great aim now was to bring his brother to Fort St. George. He had felt the full force of dull inertia, and he wanted the steam-power of a resolute Governor-General to drive the public machinery. Lord Mornington did not long delay, but before he arrived at Fort St. George a duel had been fought, the result of which placed Arthur in command of the troops collected about Arnee. His senior, Colonel Aston, had been mortally wounded in a duel which was no fault of his, and the duties he perforce relinquished Colonel Wellesley was directed to perform. He was now in his place, directing with all his might the final preparations for his first Indian campaign.

His life in the camps on the Palar was far more active and anxious than that he had led in Fort St. George. An army, said Frederick the Great, "goes upon its belly"; and Wellesley's first care was for his bazaars, on which the comfort of the troops depended, for his grain-supply, of which there was none, and his draught-cattle, without which the army could not move. It was no easy task, but he accomplished it by dint of strict regulations and personal supervision. He had to contend with dishonest and incapable agents, European as well as Asiatic; with

the caprice of the *brinjaries*, or native grain-merchants, and he managed them by humouring their fancies; with the slowness of the Madras officials, and general slackness and bad methods all round. There was a different rate of exchange in the several camps, and a government rate which agreed with none, so he suspended the latter. "We are sadly off for money," he wrote to Henry Wellesley. "Between ourselves, the Paymaster-General has too many mercantile concerns." On another occasion he found that the Superintendent of Bazaars had the contract for the sale of arrack, and his remonstrance on the impropriety had an instant effect. He asked for help when he took command, having started at an hour's notice without a servant, and the Madras people sent him two Company's officers, neither of whom understood a syllable of the language, and "one so stupid that I can make no use of him, and the other such a rascal that half of my occupation consists in watching him, lest, under the authority of my name, he should play tricks in the country." In addition to his labours in providing the troops with provisions, transport, and equipment, he attended assiduously to their discipline and training; so that when General Harris arrived in the camp on January 29th, 1799, to take command, he found a fine, well organised, and effective division. It so happened that it became a question whether or not Lord Mornington should join the army in the field. His brother was aghast at the notion, as he saw that it would deprive the General of the command. "All I can say upon the subject is," was his frank comment, "that if I were in General Harris's situation and you joined the army, I should quit it." Lord Mornington cordially agreed, re-

marking that he had only raised the question because certain persons made such a clamour. We may guess at the amount of friction even he had to endure from his statement that only with the utmost difficulty could he restrain the Council from interfering with the Commander-in-Chief; but that he had now plainly declared war against every attempt of the kind. In that wholesome mood the Colonel sought to keep him steadfast by saying that it was "impossible to make the General too respectable, or hold him too high." Perhaps there was some exaggeration, but it was of the right kind, springing from a zeal for thoroughness which is absolutely essential to efficiency in military affairs. Resolved to do everything in his power to "insure the grand object," he borrowed money and sold his own horses to aid in promptly moving troops, and he paid into the public chest moneys which previously other officers had always "taken to themselves." So the "ponderous machine" was prepared, despite the "incapacity," the want of decision and of attention to essentials, so painfully visible to the active young man of business; and in a short time it started forward by the hill roads that led to the capital of Mysore. Down to the last moment Colonel Wellesley, seeing how short was the available time, feared that the enterprise would not be finished in less than two campaigns. Audacious and resolute, he was not sanguine, even in youth.

The signal having been given, the army moved slowly into and through the hill country on its westerly course. The Nizam's contingent, six thousand foot under Colonel Roberts and Captain Malcolm, and ten thousand horse,

which, says Wellesley, they call twenty-five thousand, under Meer Allum, having descended towards the coast, joined the main body. The Hyderabad troops were then reinforced by the Thirty-third Regiment, and the whole placed under Wellesley's command. The direction of the march was upon Bangalore through the Baramahal —a parcel of rugged hill territory obtained from Tippoo by Cornwallis. Simultaneously, a force from Bombay under General Stuart, six thousand strong, landed at Cannanore, ascended the Ghauts, and took post near Sedaseer, a summit whence the table-land of Mysore, lying sheer below, was clearly visible almost as far as Seringapatam. Harris crossed the frontier on March 5th, and Stuart attained his eyry on the 2nd, thus placing himself within reach of Tippoo, if Tippoo chose to attack. He did choose. For while the immense columns of the main army were struggling through the valleys in order to gain the plateau, and before they could extricate themselves from the jungle paths, Tippoo resolved to strike his weaker Bombay antagonist. On March 5th, when General Harris was barely over the frontier, Stuart from his watch-tower saw a huge camp arise below and a green standard floating above a great pavilion. The next day, before Stuart could concentrate his little band, or even reinforce the advanced post at Sedaseer, Tippoo was on him with a tiger-spring. Three native Sepoy battalions were suddenly assailed in front and rear by the hostile troops which had stealthily crept up through the jungles; and General Hartley, on the alert at break of day, had only just time to warn Stuart of the peril. The troops were surprised; yet those three battalions, commanded by

Colonel Montresor, so stoutly fought Tippoo for more than four hours, that the General had time to bring up the Seventy-seventh and part of the Seventy-fifth Foot, and these, after half an hour's fight, prevailed and swept away the enemy's column which had assailed the rear of Montresor's sturdy band. Still it was a near thing, for the Sepoys were exhausted by fatigue, and their supply of ammunition was nearly at an end. Tippoo retreated to his camp, and in a few days disappeared; but Stuart also thought it prudent to withdraw at once to Seedapore, where he still covered the magazines in Coorg. Had Tippoo brought up his whole army instead of a part, he might have driven Stuart down the Ghaut—might, but probably would not, considering the stoutness of the Bombay Sepoys and the tougher materials furnished by two English regiments.

It was not until three weeks later that the Mysorean encountered his other and more redoubtable foe. His army was weaker by several hundreds and discouraged by defeat, but he was in his own country, had a fine body of horsemen, and still preserved a central position between the column from Bombay on the west and the host pressing on from the eastward. His opportunities, had he known how to use them, were considerable; for General Harris had to move through a country of rock, jungle, and forest, and guard a convoy which covered a vast area. The army, Wellesley's force being on the left, marched in two columns, enclosing the huge mass of guns, animals, and carts. There were a battering train of fifty pieces, "a moving arsenal," another fifty cannon, and altogether above a hundred thousand bullocks. "Besides all these," writes the Colonel, "the number of

elephants, camels, bullocks, carts, coolies, and plunderers belonging to individuals in the army, particularly in that of the Nizam, was beyond calculation," yet at least "double the number in the employment of the public." In short, when on the march "there was a multitude in motion which covered about eighteen square miles." The consequence was that when they entered the Mysore country, the draught-cattle began to die for want of food. "However, on inquiry," says Colonel Wellesley, "it was found that the root of the evil lay in a parcel of absurd, impracticable, shopkeeping regulations which had been made for the bullock-department, under which no great undertaking could prosper, and the first step," when the army got near Bangalore, "was to abolish them all." Then the "useless lumber," which Wellesley had pressed the General to leave at Vellore, was destroyed, and nothing survived but the useful equipment. He was, however, of opinion that if Tippoo had had sense and spirit sufficient to use his cavalry and infantry as he might have done, the army would have been kept much longer in the jungles of Bangalore. As it was, his light horse, "the best of their kind in the world," kept the enemy in sight and even destroyed as much forage as they could. Nevertheless the army covered ten or twelve miles a day, and sometimes more, and suffered no loss of importance during the whole march.

The frontier places, mostly fortified hills which rose in isolated blocks sheer from the plain, were easily captured or surrendered, and the army, bending westward, made for the quarter where Tippoo gathered up his flustered troops. They were found near Mallavelly, on the right bank of the Maddoor, an affluent of the

Cauvery. General Harris did not intend to attack when he came in sight of the enemy on March 27th. He was about to encamp for the day, but as the advance guard and even the lines selected were under fire, and as the Mysore cavalry showed a disposition to charge, the General supported his front, and an impromptu combat ensued. Wellesley, the Thirty-third leading, moved in echelon against the right flank of Tippoo's array, and as the operation seemed to open a gap in the centre, Tippoo tried to break through. But in the rear stood three regiments of horsemen under General Floyd, who dashed at once into the offensive column, routing and driving it from the field. Wellesley's vigorous onset, combined with Floyd's charge, really decided the action. On the other flank, a small body of the enemy's horse rode at the European brigade, some of them piercing the line, but most of them falling before it. The combat was over in a couple of hours, neither Tippoo's infantry nor cavalry being able to stand for a longer period, itself a sufficient testimony to the unhesitating dash of the British brigades. In fact Mallavelly gave them the moral ascendency which they steadily maintained. They lost a few score in killed and wounded; the Mysoreans perhaps two thousand. It was Wellesley's first Indian battle.

Want of water compelled General Harris to fall back on Mallavelly, where there were tanks, and here he halted for a day. Tippoo, hovering in the vicinity, expected that his opponent would move straight on the capital by the left bank of the Cauvery. He was soon disappointed, for rightly judging that Tippoo was unprepared on the other bank, General Harris on the 29th deftly and

secretly marched upon Sosilly, where the next day the whole army crossed the river by an easy ford. He thus put the river between him and Tippoo, approached General Stuart and the small columns operating on his own left, gained access to a country not yet ravaged, and was able to march upon the least defensible side of Seringapatam, the point where he was not expected. Five short marches brought him unopposed to the southern side of the fortress into which Tippoo had retired after his defeat. On April 6th, General Floyd was sent with a strong detachment of all arms to meet General Stuart, but before he started the siege operations began.

Seringapatam stands, or stood, on an island formed by the Cauvery, and filled up the westerly end with fortified fronts on both branches along the river banks, and of course on those facing south and east. The palace and mosque towered above the walls, and pleasure-grounds, interspersed with ruined buildings and cut off by a line of entrenchments, occupied the larger half of the island. Coming up from the southward, General Harris pitched his camp, facing east, behind an aqueduct which was carried in a southerly direction, his rear protected by rough ground, and his left resting on the Cauvery above the town. The space between the aqueduct and the fortress was occupied by the enemy whose rockets annoyed the camp, and on the day of his arrival he determined to dislodge him by a night attack. Here we come upon what has been made so much of as "Colonel Wellesley's repulse." Two columns were sent against the line of Tippoo's foreposts; the left, under Colonel Shaw, succeeded; the right, under Wellesley,

failed. The aqueduct meandered in the form of the letter S. In the upper limb was a tope or grove; in the lower the village of Sultanpetah. The Thirty-third got into confusion in the gloom, and Wellesley's attack was frustrated. His explanation is that the night was dark, that the enemy was strongly posted, and that he "could not find out the post" which he was to occupy; but he attacked it at daylight on the 6th, he writes, and "carried it with ease and little loss." He resolved thenceforth, and his reason explains the failure, that of his own will he would "never suffer an attack to be made by night upon an enemy who is prepared and strongly posted, and whose posts have not been reconnoitred by daylight." Evidently that had not been done, and the hurried enterprise was an exemplification of "more haste less speed." General Harris, visiting the spot two days afterwards, found it not so favourable for keeping hold of as Colonel Shaw's position higher up. He also states that, on the 4th, General Baird, having gone out by night against the enemy's horse and cut them up, "missed his road coming back, although one would have thought it impossible," for it was starlight. No wonder night attacks so often fail. In the abortive skirmish Wellesley was hit in the knee, "a slight touch from which I have felt no inconvenience"; and according to General Harris, he was in a good deal of agitation when he reported his ill success at midnight. Plainly he was much vexed; but the story put about years afterwards that General Baird's friendly intervention alone gave him an opportunity of retrieving his failure is not credible. In fact, the reflection of General Harris on the night attacks—"altogether, circumstances considered,

we got off very well"—is not the language of an angry Commander-in-Chief.

When the Bombay army entered the camp on April 14th, the besiegers were solidly established on a strong line stretching from the bank of the Cauvery below to the bank above the town; and as it had been determined to attack the north-western angle, because it could be battered by converging fires, Stuart's troops were sent over the river. This served the double purpose of taking ground beyond the Cauvery, whence a flank fire from the north could be brought to bear on the weak angle of the fortress, and of misleading Tippoo. He had not, like his father, a soldier's eye, nor, like his father, that steadfast courage which glows more brightly as perils increase. His resolve to fight was unshaken, but he fought in the spirit of a doomed man, yet without displaying any of that bright invention which is sometimes the fruit of despair. He seems to have known instinctively that his annihilation as a sovereign had been decreed, as it had, and to have run half-way to meet his fate. He had made up his mind to die fighting, but while Sultan he would also gratify his vengeance—he had some European prisoners of war, and he murdered them by torture, hammering nails into their skulls. He had nothing left but his gloomy valour and his cruelty.

The besiegers worked steadily on, advancing their posts, building their batteries, and pounding the protruding angle from both sides. The Mysoreans, dashing out upon the Bombay troops, who seemed the best mark, were firmly met, and retired with a loss of many hundred men. No other sortie was attempted; and on May 2nd two heavy batteries, opening at short range on the cur-

tain south of the bastion at the angle, made a practicable breach in a couple of days. Enterprising officers explored the river-bed, and some crept up to the foot of the defences. They found the water in the hard bed of the river not much more than a foot deep, and the obstacles on the inner side easily surmountable. Therefore it was resolved to storm the place a little after noon on the 4th, when the native, who is alert at night and dawn, is apt to seek repose; but lest his suspicions should be aroused by any obvious movement, four thousand three hundred troops, more than one-half Europeans, were packed into the trenches early in the morning. General Baird, who had been a prisoner in Seringapatam when Hyder ruled there, commanded the whole. He gave one column to Colonel Sherbrooke, another to Colonel Dunlop, and put the reserve under Colonel Wellesley. When the hour arrived for the onset, Baird, giving the signal, led the stormers out of the trenches; in ten minutes the fierce columns, though struck by a sharp fire, had forded the river, ascended the breach, and planted the British flag on the ruins. Then Sherbrooke cleared the walls to the south, and Dunlop's troops, for Dunlop fell on the breach, swept the northern side, and in two hours the place was won. Not without encountering the grim resistance of fanaticism and despair, for Tippoo, surprised by the sudden onset and uproar, mounted his horse and flung himself in the path of Dunlop's column, heading his host with commanding bravery and dying in the midst of five hundred men, whose bodies were piled up above and around his corpse. Wellesley entered the fortress "immediately after the assault," says Colonel Gurwood, "and was one of the few present when Tippoo Sultan's

body, which was still warm, was discovered in the sally-port gateway," on the northern front of the works. The sons of Tippoo surrendered to General Baird, who the next morning was succeeded in the command of Seringapatam by Colonel Wellesley. No reason for the change has been given. "Major-General Baird, having desired to be relieved, Colonel Wellesley being next on the roster, was ordered on the same night [the 4th] to command within the fort;" such is Gurwood's brief but explicit statement. On the other hand Baird simply says in his official report that he was relieved by Colonel Wellesley, and he certainly remonstrated in terms so intemperate that he requested and obtained permission to withdraw them. Whatever the reason it cannot in the least affect the character of Wellesley, who as usual obeyed orders. General Harris did not consult Lord Mornington, but he divined his wishes, and learned two months afterwards that had he not appointed the Colonel to the post, the Governor-General would have done so, because the knowledge and experience which he had of his character showed that his brother possessed the necessary qualifications for such employment. Nor was the step taken too soon. That the troops should plunder was inevitable; they had come to push of bayonet with Tippoo's people and had stormed his capital. But the disorder had to be stopped for the sake of the army as well as the place. "Nothing," wrote Wellesley, "can have exceeded what was done on the night of the 4th; scarcely a house was left unplundered." He called at once for fresh troops; he asked for a provost-marshal, saying that until a few were hanged, the marauding would not cease. Some were hanged, and some, of

course, flogged, and, by dint of just action, he was able to report two days later that the plunder was stopped, the fires extinguished, and that the inhabitants, who had fled, were returning. In short, by vigour and justice, he restored confidence among a people who are quick to recognise the strong just man whom they can respect as well as fear.

During the next three months the Governor of Seringapatam was engaged in the numberless occupations which beset a man of business. He was obliged to be soldier, engineer, statesman, traffic-manager, and even sanitary authority. It was his duty to restore discipline, shaken a little not only by the plunder of the town, but by the enormous amount of the prize-money, over a million sterling, which for a moment it was feared would not be distributed according to the General's promise. Then he had to bury Tippoo, which was done with due pomp and circumstance, and to see that proper respect was shown to his family. But the Government had determined to restore the old Hindoo dynasty dispossessed by Hyder, the representative of which was at that time following the trade of a potter. The sons and wives of Tippoo, duly pensioned, were sent to Vellore, the Hindoo gentleman, to his delight and astonishment, was placed on the musnud, and Mysore town was fixed on as his seat of government. Wellesley's strong opinions on the question of prize were creditable to his sense of decency as well as equity. He was disgusted with an order to search the zenana for treasure, and only obeyed when he could not avert that grasping action, taking "every precaution to render the search as decent and as little injurious to the feelings of the ladies

as possible." The prize-agents proposed to sell the clothes of Tippoo by public auction, which would "not only be disgraceful" but might be unpleasant; he stopped them and recommended that the raiment should be bought by the Government or given to the Princes. "You may conceive," he writes to his brother, "what sharks they are. This day (August 19th) I have been obliged to send an order to prevent them from selling the doors in the palace." Indeed, he had "no little difficulty" in keeping "private property" out of their maws. He took his own share, which was his due, but Lord Mornington refused to accept the hundred thousand pounds derived from the sale of ordnance and stores, which Mr. Pitt and the Company offered to him. Here it may be noted that Wellesley's first thought was to repay, out of his prize-money, the sum advanced by his brother to purchase his rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. The answer was, "No consideration can induce me to accept payment of the sums which I have formerly advanced for you"; so strong and genuine was the friendship of these great men. At the same time the Colonel was serving the public at a loss. His allowances did not cover the expenses entailed by his situation. "I was sent here," he writes, "with a garrison consisting of about half the army and a large staff, and I have not received one shilling more than I did at Fort St. George. The consequence is that I am ruined." Yet he did his daily tale of duty just as thoroughly as if the General had taken the trouble to remove the scandal. He says that since the preceding December he had in some months spent five times, in others four times, more than he received, and that he signed papers authorising officers under his command

and living upon him, by the custom of the service, to obtain nearly half as much more than was by regulation due to him. No wonder he wrote to his brother saying that he would not have referred to the subject had there been any probability that General Harris would represent his case before the Governor-General left Madras. The reason of his suffering was not only that he had been neglected by the General, but that he would not do "the dirty things" done elsewhere, that is, pocket what did not rightly belong to him. As early as May 8th he put his sentiments on the Company's administration in plain terms. "I intend to ask to be brought away with the army if any civil servant of the Company is to be here with civil authority who is not under my orders, for I know that the whole is a system of job and corruption from beginning to end, of which I and my troops would be made the instruments." Never could he bear with meanness, corruption, or disorder.

All kinds of work came before him, and tested his administrative capacity; he shirked none and was equal to all—from the drawing up a regulation for the administration of justice within his domain, to the duties of a commissariat clerk, which he performed for a month, none having been sent him. In settling the future of the conquered province and its division among the victors, his opinion of course was sought; but what it is most interesting to note is that the system he favoured was based on an estimate of what would be safe, creditable, and "not likely to lead us into new wars." So that from the outset the great captain, who said that "nothing was more horrible than a victory except a defeat," had no love for war. He accepted it as a duty and a

necessity: he waged it with all the vigour and skill he could command; but he would always have avoided war, if avoidance would be compatible with imperial safety and imperial honour.

By the middle of August General Harris, who had been employed in reducing hill-forts, delivering Tippoo's country from marauding bands, and restoring tranquillity so far as that could be done, retired to Madras, and the post he quitted fell to Colonel Wellesley, whose appointment to the command of the troops in Mysore is dated August 24th, 1799. His new field of action was extensive and his duties onerous. The half-robber chiefs in the western hills were and long remained unsubdued; the Mahrattas on the north could not give up their love of a foray; the former troopers of Tippoo who had taken to the jungle disturbed the country. There were large tracts, like Wynaad, to reduce, and vassal rulers to protect. The normal state of the districts between Mysore and the sea was one of war, and it was the business as well as duty of the Company to repress violence and establish tranquillity. Wellesley did all he could to overcome the disturbers. He kept a sharp eye on all their doings; he stimulated the energy of his subordinates; enjoined severe but just measures, seeing clearly that men who relied on, believed in, and lived by force would yield to no other remedy; and he visited nearly the whole of the area under his control. So far as the settlement of the country was concerned, he favoured the dismantling of the rock-fortresses and the making of roads, so that the cultivators might be freed from the marauders and the traders protected from highwaymen. His great capacity for work enabled him to perform his

varied public duties thoroughly and yet omit none of the social and humanising kind. It is pleasant to find him, on his return from the camp to Seringapatam, sending a proper assortment of garden-seeds to a lady, and looking after the building of an abode for Colonel Close. "As the [boundary] walls are not handsome," he writes, "I will cover those which must be near your house with a creeper. . . . I have sent you some plantain trees and shall have others for you when the season for cutting arrives." When Lady Clive proposed to visit Mysore, he suggested that she should not come before June, "as April and May are very hot here"; and he hoped she would stay at his quarters, the Dowlut Bang, "the zenana of which, when a little improved, will accommodate her and her family admirably. Neither of the palaces," he adds, "would answer for a woman at all, as they are so much exposed." These examples of thoughtfulness, and there are many, show the man as he was. And he looked after the interests and comforts of the poor and weak quite as carefully as those of the rich and strong, being a stern, hard man to evil-doers, yet always merciful, charitable, and kind.

Other and more stirring employment lay before him. Throughout the autumn of 1799 and the following spring we hear repeatedly of a certain Dhoondiah Waugh who had "taken to the road." He was a Mahratta who began life in Hyder's cavalry, grew wearied of service under Tippoo, and began business on his own account, perhaps inspired by the success of the former. The Tiger managed to have him captured, kept him in gaol, made him a Moslem against his will, and gave him a new name. After the storming of Seringapatam, let loose from prison by the

victors, he became at once a freebooter, and easily found followers. His first essays were sharply repressed by the British and the border Mahrattas, but being alert and deft, as well as valiant, he vanished in the jungles. He reappeared shortly afterwards in the service of the Rajah of Kolapore, himself a plunderer of the first order, and, fighting for the Kolapore men, he killed Pureshram Bhow, a famous Mahratta of those days. Then he returned to the wild country about Savanore, and Wellesley at Seringapatam heard of a plot devised by Dhoondiah to "carry off the young princes who are here, at the time when they should be hunting with me." The Colonel, who put no trust in the report, duly looked into it; but he did not stop his hunting, though he kept the princes at home. In the spring he journeyed to the coast of Malabar, and was haunted all the way by reports of Dhoondiah, upon whom he kept an eye, while studying the Nairs and Moplahs and encouraging the Rajah of Coorg, whom he judged to be more sincere than any native he had yet seen. Soon he heard that the free lance had gained ground in the Savanore country, and, when the Colonel reached Seringapatam in the middle of April, the disturber had become a serious personage. The aspect of affairs in May was not bright. "I think that upon the whole," he says to Munro, "we are not in the most thriving condition in this country. Polygars, Nairs, and Moplahs in arms on all sides of us; an army [Dhoondiah's] full of disaffection and discontent, amounting to Lord knows what, on the northern frontier, which increases as it advances, like a snowball in snow." By this time the adventurer had taken Dummel, a fort in the jungle country beyond the

Werdah, and had actually defeated a body of Mahrattas headed by Appah Saheb, who hoped to avenge the death of his father, Pureshram Bhow; his army, recruited from many places, was numbered by thousands, and he was meddling in Malabar. The spectral, shadowy, flitting figure had become substantial, a "despicable enemy" in the Colonel's eyes, yet one so full of danger that he had to be destroyed. Out of Dhoondiahs in India came the founders of States. In any case, while he was afoot there could be no peace. The Government of Madras were aroused at the end of May, and Mr. Secretary Webbe wrote to Wellesley: "You are to pursue Dhoondia Waugh, wherever you may find him, and to hang him on the first tree. For this purpose you will receive immediate authority to enter the Mahratta frontier." That brought on the campaign which occupied all the hot weather.

Wellesley was promptly in the field, joining his army at Hurryhur on the Toombuddra about June 15th. He was none too soon, for the south-west monsoon had broken, pouring its mighty rains upon the Western Ghauts, whence, from the hills beyond Poona to the forests of Canara, rolled the floods which filled all the great affluents of the Kistna. Over this immense tract they ran from the westward easterly, and thus crossed Wellesley's intended line of march. For Dhoondiah had set up his tents in the jungles at the confluence of the Toombuddra with the Kistna, and especially between the Werdah and Malpurba, where at Dummel and Savanore he fronted the coming host. He was aided by the *polygars*, or independent chiefs, and partially vexed by the Mahrattas, notably Doondo Punt Goklah. Practically he had carved his dominions out of

Mahratta territory, but he had the audacity to demand villages and lands from the Nizam and Mysore, offering in exchange the services of twenty-five thousand horsemen. Before Wellesley, hindered by the waters, could cross them, Dhoondiah had swooped down upon and killed Goklah in action, the second Mahratta chief who fell under his sword. But as soon as the army were over first the Toombuddra and next the Werdah, the freebooter was compelled to rely more on his shiftiness and less on his valour. So great were the obstacles that Savanore was not occupied until July 12th, by which time, however, Wellesley had cleared away everything hostile upon his flanks and rear. The enemy moved up as if intending to fight, but fled northward rapidly when he found his foes were coming at him, leaving his fort at Dummel to be taken by storm on the 26th, and all the posts and villages near captured. Goklah's Mahrattas, under his son, now joined the Colonel, eager to be avenged upon, but still greatly afraid of Dhoondiah. Wellesley, marching towards Manowly on the Malpurba, surprised the enemy's camp, charging into it with his cavalry, all the troops he had with him, and routing the defenders. All the baggage, two elephants, many camels, horses, and bullocks, were captured. Dhoondiah's six cannon had been passed over the river, but two officers and some men, seeing a boat under the fort on the other side, swam over, seized, and brought away the guns. The stroke should have been fatal, but a dexterous Mahratta adventurer is not easily caught. For more than a month he led the English a weary chase through dense jungles and over swollen streams, nor was it till September 10th that Wellesley

was able to try conclusions with him again. On the previous evening, being then at Yelpulpurvy with four regiments of cavalry, his infantry being a march behind, he learned that the Mahratta was in camp about nine miles distant. The night was so bad, and the horses and men so wearied with the day's march, that he halted until dawn. After an anxious night, he moved out in the morning. Dhoondiah had also started, and to his amazement saw his dreaded adversary athwart his path. Some five thousand strong, his forces took up a strong position resting on the rock and village of Coonaghull, where they "stood with apparent firmness." Then Wellesley, forming his four regiments into one line and leading the way, dashed into the enemy's ranks. The action was brief, for the headlong charge of men angered by so much marching could not be withstood. Dhoondiah was killed, and his death ended the warfare he had called down upon himself. In his camp his little son was found and rescued by the Colonel, who took him in his charge, and when he quitted India left some hundreds of pounds to be expended on the boy, of whom he was often mindful in after years. He lived until 1822, when he died of cholera. Dhoondiah's career was short, but it was typical. Had he not been resolutely tackled he might have founded a robber state, and imitated his exemplars, the Sultans of Mysore.

The campaign against the Mahratta trooper, none the less because the enemy was "despicable," revealed the qualities possessed by the young commander—decision and boldness tempered by prudence. It also brought out afresh those aptitudes for administration, which make so faint a show on the pages of history,

because the details are dull, yet constitute a large as well as an essential element in success, and even mitigate the effects of failure. And, while intent on catching and crushing Dhoondiah, the Colonel did not fail to keep an eye upon the whole of his command, or neglect to watch closely the politics of the Deccan. When the little war was over, he still remained a few months in the field, attending to business of all kinds growing out of the settlement of the extensive tracts which it was necessary to rescue from plundering chieftains, and to render familiar with the advantages of tranquillity. He did not return to Seringapatam until the end of November, and on December 2nd he was ordered by the Governor-General, now Marquess Wellesley, to assume the command of certain forces about to be assembled at Trincomalee in Ceylon, and he at once started for that port, leaving Colonel Stevenson with admirable instructions to direct operations in Wynaad and against the *polygars* in the recently-acquired territories. The Government were moved to this step by the successes of the French in Europe and Egypt, and they designed to attack the Mauritius or send an expedition to the Red Sea. Colonel Wellesley laboured with his wonted ardour to prepare the troops, and judging that Bombay would be the best base, he on his own responsibility transferred the small army to that harbour. It was a bold step, but it saved the expedition from failure. The Colonel had not sought and did not like a position which took him from Mysore, but he liked still less to be deposed and placed under the orders of General Baird, who was suddenly appointed to command; and he was hurt by the public announcement,

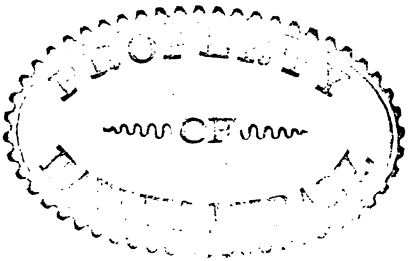
as he put it, that he was considered competent to prepare but not to lead the troops. The truth is, that the Governor-General, not without a little external pressure, found that he was obliged by the rules of the service to employ a Major-General, and consequently that he must disappoint Arthur, who, however, felt aggrieved because he thought that something like a slur was put on him. His brother wished him to act as second in command, a post most distasteful to him when Baird was chief, but he would have submitted, and had made up his mind to the sacrifice of inclination to duty, when, fortunately, the malaria from the Bombay swamps gave him a serious fever. He therefore remained behind, and permission to resume his post in Mysore soon came. It is proper to state that the Colonel cherished no rancour against Baird, whose "kind, candid, and handsome manner" to him he went out of his way to acknowledge; but he seems to have dreaded needlessly that the supersession would be interpreted as evidence of incapacity. He was also much distressed on account of the officers who had quitted Mysore to serve on his staff, and who were naturally anxious about their future when transferred to other duties. He himself lost nothing, for though the expedition made an interesting march from Kosseir to the Nile, it was too late for active operations, as Menou at Cairo had surrendered to Hutchinson; yet the report that an Indian column was approaching from the Red Sea had some influence on the French commander.

Colonel Wellesley, still suffering a little from the fever, travelled by way of Cannanore and the Western Ghauts to Seringapatam, which place he entered on

May 7th. Writing to his brother Henry, he laughingly says, "I found your friend Mrs. Stevenson, who had been with difficulty restrained from turning the house out of doors and windows during the time I was absent;" but that, of course, did not prevent him in true Anglo-Indian fashion from expressing a polite hope that she and the Colonel would make use of his house so long as they might find it convenient. The Government of Madras were glad to have him back, and seconded his efforts to render the city less unhealthy, his measures for the welfare of the troops, and the judicial steps he was obliged to take at Seringapatam for the purpose of hunting out and punishing corruption and malversation "which would disgrace the Newgate Calendar." But the condition of Mysore was gratifying. "The Rajah's government," he wrote, "is in the most prosperous state; the country is become a garden where it is inhabited, and the inhabitants are returning fast to those parts which the last savage [an irreverent allusion to Tippoo] had forced them to quit." He still harped, however, on the old string, supersession, which he had done nothing to deserve, and had some thoughts of going home, should he see no prospect of active service. Against this Henry Wellesley pleaded strongly, pointing out that as a general peace was evidently near at hand, India was the only place in which he was likely to be employed. "Although you care less about money than any man I ever yet met with," a remark worth remembering, still even in respect of cash, India, "this hateful country," was better than anywhere else. So of course he stayed, perhaps never had more than a passing wish for home, and thus remained

to do more solid work and gather more laurels. For nearly two years he was stationary at Seringapatam, actively engaged in various tasks, ruling with diligence, protecting the natives, assiduous in his care for sanitation, bringing the troops up to a high state of discipline, watching intently the movements in native politics, and always eager for intelligence from Europe, where the greater world-drama was performed. He became a Major-General in April, 1802, but the official announcement of that event did not reach him until the autumn. His brother, the Governor-General, ran imminent risk of recall, yet finally held his post. The peace of Amiens quieted down for the time the turbulent sea of European politics, and the report of its conclusion aroused no enthusiasm in India. "I agree with you entirely about the peace," he wrote to Mr. Webbe. "It establishes the French power over Europe, and when we shall have disarmed we shall have no security except in our own abjectness;" a strong expression which events did not justify, yet not unnatural to a soldier looking upon affairs from a point so far removed from the centre of politics. The peace was a truce, but the security was in the sturdy spirit and not in the abjectness of our heroic and tenacious forefathers. India, however, was strictly under its own necessities, and almost independent of the peace. Nevertheless, closely gauging the pressure of English opinion upon the Eastern politics, Colonel Wellesley thought there would be an outcry for the reduction of Indian armaments, perhaps to the prejudice of Indian interests, which really stood apart from those of the Western world far more in 1803 than they do now. But events occurred in the Mahratta empire which set

aside all idea of reduction, and, indeed, brought armies alike in the Deccan and Hindustan once more into the field. To render the new campaign and the conduct of its leaders intelligible, a brief political sketch is necessary.



CHAPTER III

THE MAHRATTA CAMPAIGNS

TIPPOO'S defeat and death had a decisive effect on the politics of the Deccan, because it left the Company face to face with one of the most curious contrivances which ever grew up in any country—the Mahratta Confederacy. There was really no other native power in the peninsula, for Oude was a subject state, and the arrangement with the Nizam placed him under the Company's protection, guarded by disciplined troops in the Company's service, and paid out of the revenues of the Ceded Districts, part of the old Mysore state. The Nizam, therefore, relieved from Mahratta oppression, was the ally of the Company, and when the Nawab of the Carnatic was reduced to the state of one who reigned but did not govern, the British power had no possible enemy in the Deccan or indeed beyond it, except the Mahrattas. They were not what they were in the beginning of the eighteenth century, for the great edifice built up by Sivajee and enlarged by his successors had become a partnership of a remarkable kind. The nominal headship had passed from his race to the Brahmins who supplanted his descendants. The redoubtable Peishwah received his investiture from the Rajah of Sattara, who has been likened to the Holy Roman Emperor, but the real power in the Confederacy

was his who could seize it; the Peishwah or his minister, if either were strong, and, if one or both were weak, Scindia or Holkar, who were not Brahmins. A certain deference was paid in point of form by the audacious partners towards the Peishwah, and he was never set aside. Still the actual power was sometimes taken from him, and the ceaseless struggle for supremacy led to endless intrigues and frequent destructive wars over an immense extent of territory which lay between the Sutlej and the Bay of Bengal, the Ganges and the Toombuddra, the plains of Nagpore and the ports on the western sea. There was rarely peace in the lands over which the Mahratta chiefs held sway, and before as well as after the fall of Tippoo Sultan they were engaged in ruthless combats. A great minister at Poona, Nana Furnavese, had endeavoured, not without success, to uphold the State, but when he died in 1800 all wisdom and moderation departed from the Government; for Bajee Rao, the last Peishwah, who substituted cunning and treachery for those high attributes, proved quite unequal, even with the aid of Nana, to contend with the partners who were equally deceitful and far more courageous; so that, when his minister died, he soon fell from his high estate and called in the British to save him from his jealous and overbearing rivals.

It was this event which brought General Wellesley again into the field at the head of an army. Some years before, the death of Tuckajee Holkar was followed by a disputed succession. He left two legitimate sons, and Dowlut Rao Scindia, supreme at Poona, finding he could not secure the Indore musnud for one brother, treacherously attacked and murdered the other. But there were

also two illegitimate sons; one of these, Vittojee, was trampled to death by an elephant in the presence and with the approval of Bajee Rao; the other, Jeswunt, fled, was imprisoned in Berar, escaped to Hindustan, and at once made war on Scindia, whose troops he defeated and whose cities he plundered. Scindia, therefore, hastening to Hindustan, fought, routed, but did not capture Jeswunt, who, crossing the Nerbudda and the Taptee, entered the Peishwah's territories. He was a bold dashing leader of the true Mahratta stamp, and the flutter of his flag and the magic of his name brought thousands to his side. He fought his way victoriously through Kandeish; and in October, 1802, he marched direct on Poona, whither Scindia had sent a detachment of infantry to aid the Peishwah. Jeswunt met them on the 25th in battle near the city. There were European officers in command on both sides, a characteristic of a period when assuredly adventures were to the adventurous; but the victory which Holkar won that day was due to his own valiant exertions at the head of his horsemen, whom he led in charge after charge upon the infantry and guns. His resolute character may be inferred from the fact that, when his troops did not obey his command, that they should not enter Poona, he compelled obedience by turning his guns upon them. Bajee Rao, frightened by the uproar of the battle, fled during the fight to Singurh, thence, when he knew the result, by Mhar to Severndroog on the coast, and finally in a British ship to Bassein, a fort on the mainland opposite the northern end of Salsette. Holkar, with a spear wound in his body and a sabre cut on his head, which he bore gaily, remained at Poona for a time, to rule by torture and robbery.

The complex situation which grew out of these sanguinary events had a decisive effect on British policy. The Mahratta chiefs suddenly became, one and all, eager for British interference. Holkar desired Colonel Close, the resident at Poona, to mediate between the rivals. Bajee Rao did more—he agreed to the conditions proposed by the Governor-General as the price of his protection, acquiesced in the establishment of a subsidiary force of infantry and guns, assigned territory to meet the cost, bound himself not to employ any Europeans hostile to England, and undertook neither to negotiate with, nor make war upon, other states without the knowledge and consent of the British Government. It was a complete surrender, and put him on a level with the Nizam, from whom he could no longer exact tribute, and the Gaikwar also, who had just been drawn within the British system. Scindia, of course, could not have approved a treaty which the Peishwah secretly detested; but General Wellesley affirms that the Gwalior chief was informed of the Peishwah's negotiations, and "urged the British Government to interfere in the Mahratta affairs, as the only mode of settling their actual confusion." None of them intended to fulfil the bond, but each hoped in some way to overreach his rival, and all to defeat the Company. Jeswunt Rao alone had no hope, for, being illegitimate, he was the natural enemy of all; but, trusting to his sword, his valour, his abilities, and being a shining leader of free lances, he fought thenceforth for his own hand, and wrote his name so deeply on the military annals of India, that his pursuit of Monson is still remembered where Assaye and Laswarree are forgotten.

The treaty of Bassein (December 31st, 1802) was a masterpiece of policy, because it consolidated British power in Southern India, and settled, once for all, the question who should ultimately hold the strongest sway in the peninsula. General Wellesley, seated at Seringapatam, had always used his influence on the side of peace; and he even hoped at this period that the Mahratta chiefs, if they were actuated by prudential motives, would fall in with the new arrangement. They were far from being so inclined, yet they dreaded a rupture or wished to defer one until they could combine. While General Stuart, Commander-in-Chief in Madras, was collecting troops on the northern frontier of Mysore to fulfil the Treaty of Bassein, Scindia brought his fine army over the Nerbudda, listened to the overtures of Holkar, entered into close relations with the Rajah of Berar, and posted himself at Burhanpore, not far from the Nizam's boundary. There he halted in evident hesitation, giving an apparent assent, and betraying no wish to prevent the restoration of the Peishwah under the new conditions. The Governor-General believed him to be sincere, because prudence dictated inaction; and while Scindia remained quite remote from Poona, General Wellesley marched up from the south and replaced Bajee Rao in his capital.

He was specially fitted, from previous experience in the southern Mahratta country, to perform the task, and at the request of Lord Clive, General Stuart gave him the command of a mixed European and native force slightly exceeding ten thousand men, technically called a detachment, but really a small army. It included his

own Mysore troops, which had long been prepared and admirably equipped for any service. Thus in approaching the rendezvous at Hurryhur, he could say in a letter to Colonel Montresor, "I get on well. I can march with as much celerity as ever, and with equal if not greater ease." That was because he had obtained good cattle and took care of them, maintained discipline, encouraged the travelling grain-dealers, and protected the natives in his camps as well as in the villages. Again, when he was some distance forward, he tells Colonel Close that his cattle are in good order, adding, "I get plenty of forage; and I have little doubt of bringing up my detachment in good style, at least as far as the Kistna." The reason was that he had himself attended to every detail in giving orders and had kept a close watch on the execution of his behests. He crossed the Toombuddra on March 9th, and when he wrote the words we have quoted he had tried the marching powers of his detachment for a week.

The general plan of operations adopted was that Colonel Stevenson, with the Hyderabad subsidiary contingent and the Nizam's troops, should move up to the river Seenah at Purinda, on the frontier towards Poona; and that Wellesley should march northward as rapidly as possible, connect himself with Stevenson, who was to be under his orders, and enter the Mahratta capital. The distance to be traversed was over five hundred, Wellesley says nearly six hundred, miles, and it was covered in forty-two days. He moved his army by Darwar to Erroor on the Kistna, and thence to Meritch, a march beyond the river. Here he turned off to his right in a north-easterly direction heading for Punder-

pore; but he did not proceed as far east as that fort, having found it more expedient to effect a junction with Stevenson near the confluence of the Neera and the Beema. Then, leaving the Hyderabad contingent on the left bank of the latter stream, he turned to the westward by Baramuttee and Jejory, made his way with some loss of transport and cattle through the rugged roadless hills, descending on Poona from the eastern side. He arrived with his cattle much the worse for the wear; for, after crossing the Kistna, the route of the army lay through a region desolated by the bands of Holkar. "They have not left a stick standing at the distance of 150 miles from Poona; they have eaten the forage and grain, have pulled down the houses and used the material as firewood, and the inhabitants have fled with their cattle. Excepting in one village I have not seen a human creature since I quitted the neighbourhood of Meritch." Such was Mahratta warfare as depicted by Wellesley to his brother.

In the last march, with the cavalry only, he rode sixty miles in thirty-two hours. For there came a report to his camp on April 19th that Amrut Rao, who held Poona for Jeswunt Rao Holkar, intended to burn the city; therefore Wellesley went off at once, and, moving all night, did not halt until he had entered the place on the following morning. The Mahratta chief did not fulfil his threat, as he wished to make terms for himself. So he prudently decamped, going out on the northern road a few hours before Wellesley's tired troopers came in sight of the Peishwah's palace. The infantry did not come up until the 21st. Major

John Malcolm, sent by Lord Wellesley, joined, and was heartily welcomed by his friend the General at Hooblee; and both were skilful enough to conciliate the principal southern Mahratta Sirdars, who hated and distrusted the Peishwah as much as they trusted the word of the British. They even led their troops to Poona, and it was partly through their influence, and partly through confidence in Wellesley, that during this long march the people remained in their villages, that the bazaars were well supplied, and that the long line of communication was uninterrupted. On March 30th he was thus able to write, after stating the alternative before him, "In any one of these cases I hope to reach Poona about the 20th of April"—the very day of his advent. On the line of march he had thought of the future, not only establishing posts, but enjoining the construction of basket-boats and the enlistment of boatmen, so as to secure the passage of the rivers and maintain his communication with Stuart when the monsoon broke; and almost his first care on reaching Poona was to direct the manufacture of pontoons at Bombay — the pontoons he had so longed for when chasing Dhoondiah Waugh three years before. The Government did not then sanction his demand or approve his suggestion. Now he was able to secure assent to his request for the movable bridges, which, he so justly said, would give him an immense advantage over the native armies during the season of rain.

So far the enterprise had been rapidly and successfully executed. The next steps were to hasten the arrival of the Peishwah from Bassein, and establish a

new line of communication, by the Ghauts, through Panwell with Bombay. Wellesley marched a few miles to the westward, but soon halted, because his absence caused alarm in Poona, not yet recovered from dread of Holkar's marauders. There is, or was twenty years ago, a foolish tradition in the hills that Wellesley in great straits flung two guns into a tank; but the guns so abandoned belonged to Colonel Cockburn's force, the rear-guard of which under Hartley fought such a brilliant action fourteen years before near Wargaom. The General did not encamp near the Bhore Ghaut; but a huge rock at Khandalla still bears the name of the "Duke's Nose." In 1803 it looked down on the rough military road as it wound up the hills from the Concan; now it towers above the famous railway which, running straight up from Callian, has not wholly superseded the highway from Poona to Panwell. In 1870 a venerable elephant was killed on the Bombay flats in order that his skeleton might be placed in the Museum. He was reputed to be the last survivor of Arthur Wellesley's transport-train.

More than a fortnight elapsed before Bajee Rao passed up the Ghauts—a delay which vexed the impetuous Malcolm, and increased the anxieties of his sober comrade. For Holkar had moved upon Aurungabad, and Stevenson was sent towards the Godavery to keep him in check, and it was still a question whether the Mahratta chiefs would combine either for a dash into the Nizam's territories or upon Poona. Wellesley judged that they would not be able to settle their personal differences, yet saw clearly that, in any case, they should be prevented from raiding to the southward.

Malcolm, and his expressions paint the moment, said, "If Bajee Rao were at all practicable, I should have no fears, but I apprehend much from the weakness and depravity of his character." In addition Colonel Collins, the British agent with Scindia, did not discourage the suggested advance of that chief to Poona, thus increasing the confusion and the danger. Nor was the apparent and perhaps real peril much diminished by the advent of the Peishwah, who entered his capital on Friday, May 13th; for Wellesley was detained another three weeks before he was free to approach Stevenson, avert the calamity of an inroad, and bring the pending questions to a final issue. The delay was not wholly due to Mahratta double-dealing, since he had to get European iron from Bombay to repair his gun carriages, and he says in a letter to General Stuart, June 2nd, "I have made 150 wheels since I came here"; but, at that moment, he thought himself better equipped, in respect of carriages, than he was when he started from Hurryhur. The army marched northward on June 4th, and speedily fell under the exacting exigencies of Indian campaigning. There was no forage on the ground; the cattle belonging to the native dealers died; the dealers themselves, whom he had so well treated, played him false; and he felt keenly the absence of the Mahratta horse, detained by the intrigues and duplicities of the Peishwah. But some few arrived by degrees, and, after a period of relative privation, his prospects of supply improved. Still he thought the army would have fared better in an enemy's country, for the peasants, uncertain who was to be master, concealed their grain, and what was obtained had to be dug out of pits. Neither Poona nor Bombay

promptly satisfied his wants; he talked of falling back, and of the folly of operating so many hundreds of miles from an assured base in Mysore.

His situation, indeed, during the months of June and July, was very embarrassing. In his rear was a ruler at Poona whom he could not trust—the character of the Peishwah's government he found to be deceit; Bajee Rao promised much and performed nothing, and was moreover in treacherous correspondence with his late enemies. Amrut Rao, it is true, listened to persuasive arguments, and ultimately brought his troopers into the British camp, while Holkar, mistrusting all sides, especially the two Mahrattas, set out for Malwa with his store of plunder. But in Wellesley's front, south of the Taptee—for Scindia, who had been joined by the Rajah of Berar, had come on to the edge of the Nizam's frontier—were two powerful armies. The aim of Scindia was to defer hostilities until the rains ceased and the rivers fell, so that he might move with freedom in any direction. Therefore he evaded a plain answer to the questions addressed to him by Lord Wellesley's agent, and prepared for war, at his own time, with Lord Wellesley's brother. Such a state of suspense became at length intolerable, and it was brought to an end so soon as the General was entrusted with powers as a political agent sufficiently large to warrant a policy of decision. In the middle of July those powers arrived in his camp, and he did not let them rust. A steady advocate of peace, he had done all he could to preserve it, but when the objects of Scindia became apparent he went straight to the mark. He summoned Scindia to prove the sincerity of his friendly professions by withdrawing

into Hindustan, and the Rajah of Berar to manifest his goodwill by retiring to Nagpore. Both said they did not intend to fight or oppose the fulfilment of the treaty of Bassein. "If you are sincere in this declaration of your friendly intentions," said Wellesley, "there appears to be no occasion for assembling your army and joining it with that of the Rajah of Berar, on the Nizam's frontier." The thrust went home. "When you shall have withdrawn your troops to their usual stations beyond the Nerbudda," continued the General, "I also shall draw back those under my command to their usual stations." If the proof of sincerity were not given, then the confederates would be attacked. Colonel Collins was ordered to press for an explicit reply, and retire if one were not given. The strong and simple language of the General sharply wound up the long delay. At the beginning of August he had moved his army to Walkee, six miles south of Ahmednugger, a fort held for Scindia. It was there he received the preposterous counter propositions of the Mahratta chiefs —they were to retire to Burhanpore when the British and allied armies had reached their stations in Madras, Seringapatam, and Bombay. Wellesley's reply was prompt and plain. On August 6th, characterising the proposal as inadmissible and unreasonable, he put his case in a few energetic words—"I offered you peace upon terms of equality and honourable to all parties; you have chosen war and are responsible for all the consequences." Such a downright negotiator, who planted himself squarely on the facts, who meant what he said, and spoke with frank simplicity, proved fatal to the game of Mahratta evasion.

As swift in action as he was plain in speech, Wellesley at once directed the British troops in Guzerat to attack Scindia's garrisons, and moved up to Ahmednugger on August 8th. That very day he stormed the *pettah*, or fortified suburb, which was defended by a body of Arabs and a battalion of Scindia's regular infantry. The lofty walls had no ramparts, so that when the stormers climbed up they had no ground on which they could stand. Yet they held on, drove the defenders to the houses, and finally after a brisk and gallant contest expelled them from the place. The next day a battery for four guns was built, which, opening on the 10th, was so destructive that the governor notified his desire to treat. He wished that the cannonade should be stayed, but "I told him that I should not cease firing till I should have taken the fort or he should have surrendered it." Finally he was allowed to depart with the garrison and his own private property, and on the 12th he "marched out with 1400 men," and the British troops marched in. The success was rapid and the loss not great—thirty killed, including four British officers, and one hundred and eleven wounded. The fort thus swiftly captured was the strongest in the country, and in the General's opinion only less formidable than Vellore. Its possession secured the line of advance, and the sharp stroke gave its conqueror a moral ascendency he always retained.

No time was lost in despatching the troops to the Godavery, which they crossed at Toka to support Colonel Stevenson, who, it will be remembered, was north of Aurungabad watching the Mahrattas. Wellesley him-

self, having much business to transact and letters to write, did not reach Toka until the 22nd, for he had to communicate with Poona on many things; with the Bombay Government, which did not work well with him, but, as usual, was disposed to fight for its own hand; with General Stuart, who did sustain him in the most ample and ungrudging spirit, who sent him reinforcements and took care to preserve the southern line of communication through the Nizam's western districts. Arrived at Toka he pushed on to Aurungabad, which he entered on the 29th at a critical moment. He learned that Scindia had deceived his antagonist, and had broken into the Nizam's country. The task which Stevenson had to perform was arduous. In his front were the ranges of hills which ran up from the Taptee valley. They were, like all such apparent barriers, passable at more than one point. Stevenson had carefully watched the Adjunta Ghaut, the most likely route, but he had also to keep an eye on the opening at Badoolah, farther east. These passages could not both be guarded, being too far apart. Scindia took advantage of this condition. He ostentatiously rode off with his horsemen towards Badoolah, and when he found that his opponent made a corresponding movement on the other side of the range, the Mahratta turned in his track, sped swiftly to Adjunta, rapidly crossed the hills, swooped down upon Jaulna by the valley of the Poorna, and put himself between Stevenson and Aurungabad. The danger was that he would dash over the Godavery and make for Hyderabad. It was not great, however, for although on hearing of Wellesley's advent he went farther eastward, still, when the General at once

marched to the Godavery at Rakisbaum, the Mahratta retired northward upon the line leading back to Adjunta. It was a prudent step, since he had only horsemen, and Stevenson, coming down from Badoolah, not only recovered Jaulna but harassed his camps by night attacks. These incidents occurred between August 22nd and September 9th. The reason of Wellesley's apprehension respecting Hyderabad was that the Godavery suddenly fell and became fordable anywhere.

It may be doubted, however, whether Scindia had any plan, seeing that neither his regular infantry nor his heavy guns had joined the swarming horse. Wellesley was glad to hear that both were coming, as the infantry would be "something solid" to go upon, and the guns would retard the marches, and give him a better chance of coming up with them. His own army was "never in such marching trim," he told the sympathetic Malcolm, then absent and ill: "I marched the other day twenty-three miles in seven and a half hours; all our marches are now made at the rate of three miles an hour." On September 18th a much-needed convoy with a military chest and many cattle came up from Mysore, and that set Wellesley free to act. He moved at once northward towards the enemy, joined Stevenson near Sailgoan and Budnapore on the 21st, and arranged a plan of offensive operations. The Mahratta army, at that time complete in horse, foot, and guns, was understood to be near Bokerdun on the little river Kaitna. Between them and the British rose a chain of heights above the right bank of the Poorna, and their camps could only be reached by traversing the passes in two bodies and uniting on the northern slopes.

Stevenson took the western and Wellesley the eastern road, designing to fall on both flanks of the Mahratta host. That movement led to the battle of Assaye, or Assye as it is written in the old books and maps.

Wellesley marched on September 22nd into the hills between Budnapore and Jaulna, and farther on the next day as far as Naulniah, which he reached at eleven in the morning and where he intended to encamp. But here he found himself unexpectedly within six miles of the confederates. A dragoon patrol brought in some grain-dealers, who told him that the Mahrattas were there, and might be seen from a rising ground, but that they were preparing to depart, and that the cavalry had already gone. So, after securing the baggage in the camp at Naulniah, he marched on, intending to assail the infantry; but instead of these alone, he found the whole army, and yet he resolved to attack, because retreat in the face of the abounding Mahratta horse would have been perilous, and, what is more important, because there was a chance, indeed a certainty that getting wind of Stevenson's advance, they would withdraw the infantry and guns. In fact, it was a great opportunity as well as a great risk, and Wellesley was not long in resolving to run the risk and seize the opportunity. Wellesley had a correct knowledge of Mahratta character, and he never showed it more emphatically than when he determined, almost as soon as he saw the enemy, to fight him where he stood. About one o'clock he was at the head of his little band scanning the masses of infantry, the lines of batteries, the columns of cavalry, some of whom crossed the Kaitna to watch him; and then he quickly decided

that he would move along the front of their camps and suddenly strike their left. It was a bold resolve, for he had not more than two thousand Europeans in his available force of five thousand men and eighteen guns, while the enemy had an army put by some at fifty and certainly exceeding forty thousand, and above one hundred cannon; it was a prudent resolve, because in fighting an Indian army victory follows the flag of the assailant who begins with, and by his onward rush retains, that moral superiority which is worth myriads of men.

What Wellesley saw from the rising ground to the south was a series of camps set up within an angle of ground formed by the Kaitna and the ravine of the Jouah. The trained infantry, Begum Sumroo's, Pohlman's, and Dupont's, were on the left above the rocky channel of the Kaitna, and with them was the formidable train of artillery. The cavalry stood on the right, extending far up the stream towards Bokerdun. The fortified village of Assaye, on the nullah which covered the rear, was occupied by some foot. Wellesley's design was to march his little column diagonally to this front, until he reached an unguarded ford at Peepulgaum, near the junction of the two ravines—the existence of which he inferred from the fact that there were houses on both banks—then cross it rapidly, form athwart the angle, and falling upon the left of Scindia's regulars, roll up the whole line. For some time, although horsemen rode out to look at him, his intention was not discerned. Probably he was not credited with the daring plan devised. When the troops reached the ford the Mahratta guns opened with great effect, and as the

destructive fire did not arrest the steady advance across the Kaitna, the real object of the movement dawned upon the European officers in the Mahratta army. With the greatest regularity and precision, admired by their opponents, the regulars changed front, forming line across the open space, nowhere more than a mile wide, facing the confluence of the water-courses, the right resting on the Kaitna, the left upon Assaye, and the clouds of horse in the rear. Wellesley drew up his handful of infantry in two lines, placing the cavalry behind as a reserve, and it thus happened that instead of attacking a flank perpendicular to his front, he had to engage a line parallel to his own. He, therefore, altered his plan, which now was to keep back his right, push forward his left, and throw the hostile forces upon Assaye and the nullah in its rear. But the battle was not so fought at the outset, for the picquets or leading troops on the right were by mistake led off towards Assaye, uncovering the second line, and falling themselves into a deadly converging fire; the Seventy-fourth followed the picquets into the cannonade, and a great gap was thus made in the array. The enemy's horse rode up to charge, and so serious was the peril on the right, that the Nineteenth Light Dragoons and a native cavalry regiment were obliged to charge at once. Eager for the fray they galloped up, cheering as they went and cheered by the wounded; and riding home even into the batteries, saved the remnants of the picquets and the Seventy-fourth. On the British left the swift and steady rush of the Seventy-eighth and the Sepoys had carried the first line of guns and crushed in upon the second, thus hurling the Mahratta regulars upon the Jouah nullah. In this part of the field

the work was done with the bayonet, not more than two rounds being fired by the British. As the second line of guns was carried, shots came from the first, for the gunners who had been spared rose up when the troops swept onward and opened fire, so that a resolute charge to the rear, headed by the General, was needed to punish the treachery. This incident did not stop the forward sweep of the line, which was in the nature of a right wheel, and brought the troops almost parallel to the Jouah ravine. The decisive strokes were the splendid charge of the Dragoons and the irresistible sweep of the Seventy-eighth upon the Mahratta right. The whole action was fought out in a comparatively small space, for the triangle formed by the ravines is nowhere more than a mile wide; and the stress of the combat fell upon Scindia's gunners and regulars, for the cavalry scarcely took any part. When the infantry fled over the nullah, the Nineteenth again charged, and unhappily Colonel Maxwell was killed. The battle began a little after three o'clock, it was over at six; and in that brief space, out of less than five thousand, there were above four hundred Europeans and more than sixteen hundred natives killed and wounded,—a rare proof of the courage and resolution which, in three hours, crushed a great army, destroyed a much-prized native infantry, and captured one hundred and two guns and all their tumbrils. Moreover these grand soldiers had actually marched twenty-four miles before they stepped across the Kaitna into the battlefield. Wellesley, of course, says nothing of his own conduct in the fight, but others testify that he was always in the thick of the action, a horse dying under him; and that he was not only cool,

but displayed that springing valour already conspicuous when he led his horsemen upon the bands of Dhoondiah Waugh. Munro, who, by the light of the rules of war, criticised sharply the mode of attack, admitted that "though it might not have been the safest it was undoubtedly the most decided and heroic; it will have the effect of striking greater terror into the hostile armies than could have been done by any victory gained with the assistance of Colonel Stevenson's division, and of raising the national military character, already high in India, still higher." No General could desire, from a competent judge, more emphatic approval of his great achievement.

Although the operations were prolonged for nearly three months, yet the victory of Assaye practically decided the war in the Deccan. While Wellesley kept his division ready to move anywhere, Stevenson crossing the Taptee captured Burhanpore and the strong hill fort of Asseerghur. No efforts of the enemy availed to avert these results. At first the combined Mahratta army made a feint in a southerly direction, which drew Wellesley towards Aurungabad, but he soon discovered it and returned before they could meddle with Stevenson. Then Scindia, sending the remains of his infantry over the Nerbudda, halted on the Taptee, and the Berar Rajah alone pushed southward again, passing the hills on the west and moving towards Aurungabad. Wellesley at once came down the Ghaut, and at his approach the Mahratta went eastward, trying, but in vain, to snatch a heavy convoy, the escort of which beat off his horse. The General, marching one hundred and twenty miles in eight days, saved all his convoys, defended the Nizam's

territories, and would have smashed the Rajah had the convoy not demanded his care. "But all the subsequent solid operations of the war," he wrote to his brother, "depended on the arrival of that convoy, and it was more important to secure it than to gain a victory over a body of horse." After resting the troops, he followed the Rajah into Berar, and Stevenson moved into the same territory. Scindia had by this time, influenced, perhaps, by Lake's brilliant victories, made a sort of peace which he did not observe; but as the Rajah held aloof, hoping to save Gawilghur, both armies converged upon him, and, after being separated for two months, joined together at Parterly on November 29th. Though the enemy had decamped, he was still visible on the march from a tower: his cavalry skirmished with the advance; and when Wellesley rode out to push up infantry supports, he discerned his antagonists posted in front of Argaum, where he designed to encamp. It was late and hot, but he determined to attack. Designing to press the enemy's left he advanced in two lines, the right thrown forward; but when his Sepoys came within range of the guns, remembering, perhaps, the slaughter of Assaye, they fell into a panic and faced about. "Luckily," the General wrote, "I happened to be at no great distance from them, and I was able to rally them and re-establish the battle. If I had not been there I am convinced we should have lost the day." So that it was a critical moment. When formed again they behaved steadily, and as only Scindia's horse really fought, the action was soon over. Yet so much time had been lost that, as Wellesley wrote to his brother, "not more than twenty minutes' sun remained when I led on

the British cavalry to the charge." Fortunately the moon was bright, and the horse galloped on and gathered much spoil. The routed enemy left on the field thirty-eight guns and all his ammunition. "The troops were under arms, and I on horseback, from six in the morning until twelve at night." The immediate fruit of the battle was that Ragojee Bhonsla, "the only Mahratta who cared about his country," soon yielded. For the formidable stronghold of Gawilghur, built upon a block of mountain and only accessible on one side, to reach which Stevenson struggled for a week through the roadless hills, was battered for two days and stormed on the third (December 15th); and that fine exploit, which induced the Berar Rajah to sign a treaty, ended the war in the Deccan.

On the day after the fall of the Berar fortress, a welcome visitor arrived in camp—Malcolm, who had been so long absent ill at Bombay. The two men thoroughly liked and appreciated each other, and Malcolm's gaiety and high spirits were a luxury to the staff. Wellesley had grown graver and older-looking under the stress of his immense labours as a soldier-diplomatist; for the whole charge lay upon him, and "something of this gravity," says Sir John Kaye, "communicated itself to his associates. Much work and much thought imparted a sombre tint to the social aspects of life at headquarters." They were tired and still. "Unless there was something of unusual interest to excite him the General spoke little at table." Hence "Malcolm's arrival in camp was like a sudden burst of sunshine." From one of his letters we obtain a glimpse of the two men, for Malcolm says, "I have written in

the same manner as I have been accustomed to speak while partaking your favourite recreation," that is, pacing up and down before his tent in the Deccan as a few years after, in a gray greatcoat, he moved up and down the little square at Freneda, and in his old age he walked with Arbuthnot on the platform at Walmer.

When the treaty with the Berar Rajah was ratified Wellesley set out on his return to the south, striking at a strong band of marauders on his way, and warmly thanking his troops, who marched sixty miles in twenty hours, for their "persevering activity." He visited Poona and then descended the Ghauts to Bombay, where he remained some days, and then once more ascended to the cooler Deccan. "I was feasted out of Bombay as I was feasted into it," he wrote to a friend; but whether so greeted or not he never ceased his public labours, and his prolific pen was never idle. A deep difference of opinion had arisen respecting the proper policy which should be pursued towards Scindia, and Wellesley strongly urged the Governor-General to restore Gwalior to that chief. If that were not done and war was renewed, Wellesley would enter upon it with zeal and ardour, having no doubt of success. "But," he added, "however I may be pleased with the prospect of that success, as far as I am concerned I should prefer the continuance of peace for the public and for you." He laments that the system of moderation and conciliation on which he made the much-praised treaties should be in danger of being given up. "The Governor-General may write what he pleases at Calcutta; we must conciliate the natives, or we shall not be able to do his business; and all his treaties, without conciliation and

an endeavour to convince the Native Powers that we have views besides our own interest, are so much waste paper." Such were his principles, and he always acted on them to the best of his ability and knowledge—a warrior who sought peace, a statesman who had a single eye to the commonweal.

The period of his sojourn in India was now approaching its term. In June, 1804, the Governor-General called him to Bengal, whither he at once went, passing through Seringapatam and Madras, and, of course, diligently transacting business all the way. Not long after he joined his brother came the startling news of Monson's disasters, which he called in a letter to Mr. Webbe, "the greatest and most disgraceful to our military character of any that have ever occurred." The memory of it yet lives in native song, and in September, 1804, the unlooked-for success of Holkar seemed to shake for a moment the bases, not of our power, but of the recently-concluded peace. The Governor-General gave General Lake the opportunity of asking for the services of Wellesley, but he desired that the latter should return to the Deccan. Thither, accordingly, he went in November, resolved to embark for England as soon as Holkar had been defeated and his brother would give permission. Holkar was routed by Lake in December, and at the beginning of 1805, all signs of danger having disappeared, the General made up his mind to depart. The English mail arrived at Madras on February 16th, 1805, with letters of September 4th, 1804, and a *Gazette*, notifying that Lake had been made Lord Lake of Delhi and Laswarree, and a Knight of the Bath. That night he determined on

going to England. Lord William Bentinck had succeeded to the Governorship of Madras, and Sir John Cradock, afterwards Lord Howden, to the post of Commander-in-Chief. To the latter Wellesley wrote in January, "You think about my staying in India like a man who has just come out, and I like one who has been here for seven years involved in perpetual troubles." No Indian situation would tempt him to stay, even were he certain that in England no employment would be given to him. "I am not rich," he added, "in comparison with other people, yet quite sufficiently so for all my wants," and he was therefore independent of office. The truth is, a sort of home-sickness had come upon him; he was inexpressibly anxious to see his friends again, especially perhaps a fair friend. She had told him that the small-pox had ravaged her beauty, but, of course, he did not allow that misfortune to break his troth. He was really ill. "He appears plagued with a slow fever," wrote Malcolm to Major Shawe: "He frets himself, which I never knew him do before." So it was. Writing to an agent respecting a passage, he said that he was "not very particular about accommodation," did not "care a great deal about the price," nor "much who the captain is or what the ship," so eager was he to fly from India. The Admiral offered him a passage on the *Trident*, and after bidding farewell to his friends and comrades personally, or by letter, taking leave of the troops so long under his command, and depositing a sum of money for the benefit of Salabut Khan, the son or adopted son of Dhoondiah Waugh, Sir Arthur Wellesley sailed from Madras in March, 1805, bearing with him proofs of public gratitude and private affection,

alike from natives who knew him to be just and humane, and from Europeans who admired his great actions, his honest, frank, and high-minded character. He sailed none too soon. To his brother he wrote in July, from St. Helena, that his health was restored, but that had he not quitted India he would have had a serious fit of illness; and to Malcolm he said, "I was wasting away daily, and latterly, when at Madras, I found my strength failed which had before held out."

It was therefore time he should quit the trying climate which he had braved so many years, and it was well for England that he reached her shores, not only with the renown he had won and the lustre of the great services he had performed fresh upon him, but with body and mind alike abounding in the solid strength and tireless energy required to front and overcome the tremendous perils and obstacles which lay hid in the future. Without undue ambition he was, what he desired to be, a great and, so far as man can be, unselfish servant of his country, who held himself bound in duty to uphold and promote by honourable means her honour, prosperity, and power. Such he was in India, and such he remained to the end of his days.

CHAPTER IV

HOME: SOLDIER AND CIVILIAN

AT the moment when Wellesley landed on September 10th, 1805, although Nelson had not yet won his immortal victory, Consul Bonaparte, now Emperor Napoleon, had relinquished his plan of invasion, and was preparing to march across the Rhine on the path which led to Ulm and Austerlitz. The splendour of his deeds dazzled the eyes but did not daunt the hearts of his insular adversaries, who had resumed that stupendous conflict by land and sea, which they conducted with Roman tenacity to a Roman conclusion. The great qualities of the "Sepoy General" were known only to a few, perhaps to none in their fulness, except his elder brother and those comrades who had seen and shared his toils. The plains of the Deccan were more remote than they are now, and it was far more difficult even than it is in our day to realise and appreciate the merit of services in India. The Minister, Mr. Pitt, who saw him more than once, "was at a loss which most to admire, his modesty or his talents," saying "he had never met with any military officer with whom it was so satisfactory to converse." So that his character soon impressed itself upon the men with whom he was brought into contact, and, on the whole, although a little later

he was for a time thrust into a civil post, there is no ground for saying that as a soldier he really suffered any neglect. Indeed, within six weeks of landing he was ordered on active service, taking part as brigadier in an abortive expedition to Hanover. For some time also he commanded a brigade at Hastings, part of the force watching the French on the opposite coast. He did his duty in this subordinate position as thoroughly as he had done it when at the head of a great army, for it was his principle to serve the King and his Government whenever and wherever they might employ him. In the spring of 1806, accepting, with the approval of his friends, an offer from Lord Grenville, Mr. Pitt's successor as Prime Minister, he entered the House of Commons as Member for Rye, and in April he married Lady Catherine Pakenham, to whom he had pledged himself before he sailed for India. In Parliament he came at once to the front and made a deep impression by the masterly, lucid, and convincing speeches which he delivered in defence of his brother's policy and administration. Nor did he confine his efforts to the House. He wrote a memorandum on the Marquess Wellesley's Government, which has been justly described as still the most practical and correct essay written on the great subject; and he may be said to have enlightened and converted some of the severest critics of his brother's career. Well might he say: "By your firmness and decision you have not only saved but enlarged and secured the invaluable empire entrusted to your government at a time when everything else was a wreck, and the existence even of Great Britain was problematical." What a fine censure on the folly, party

spirit, and ignorance which for years animated the assailants of Lord Wellesley! "You will have seen," he writes to Malcolm, July 1806, "that I am in Parliament, and a difficult and most unpleasant game I have had to play in the present extraordinary state of parties;" nor to parties was he ever subservient.

He was soon to take a more active and certainly not less difficult and unpleasant part. The death of Pitt, almost on the morrow of Austerlitz, brought in "all the talents," and Fox at the Foreign Office filled Napoleon with unfounded hopes of acquiescence in his terms. But Lord Grenville and his colleagues were as tenacious as Pitt, and the peace which Napoleon says he hoped for could not be obtained. In 1807 the famous Ministry struck on the hard rock of King George's inveterate prejudices against the Roman Catholics. His subjects of that faith served in the army and navy it was true, but, as it were, on sufferance. On this delicate question Sir Arthur, who held and openly expressed the opinion that no subject should be precluded from serving the State on account of his religious belief, nevertheless thought that from a practical point of view no measure was required, since Dissenters of all shades did serve and had served for years ashore and afloat. The Cabinet wished to make the grant of commissions to any subject lawful, and brought in a Bill for that purpose. But the King was steadfast, considered himself ungenerously treated, and by his opposition obliged the Ministry to resign. One result of the political change was that Sir Arthur was offered and accepted the post of Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, the Duke of Richmond. He held that ungrateful office for two

years, but twice during the period he was engaged in active service in Denmark and Portugal. It is not necessary, nor would it be practicable, to dwell on his Irish secretaryship, which may be regarded as an episode, and dealt with briefly once for all. His first labour was to secure the return of members favourable to the Government. He had to buy, and did buy openly by gifts of places, pensions, and titles, those persons high and low who disposed of seats, just as he detached an Amrut Rao from the Mahratta confederacy, or induced an Umeer Khan to enter the Nizam's service. It was the custom of a corrupt time, and he did not attempt to pretend that it was otherwise than disgraceful to the men who put themselves up to the highest bidder. They were for sale, he bought them; they were a minority, yet were needed. "For one Member," he said in after life, "who was returned to the Parliament of 1807 through what you call corruption, ten took their seats the honest advocates of the opinions which they held;" and he thought that the tenth might be secured "rather than allow them to go over to the opposition." When asked whether he justified the buying and selling of seats, he answered that the inquiry opened up the whole question of constitutional government. Such was his point of view. He heartily despised a venal politician, but he thought it right to use influence in the counties and open boroughs, where, in that day, 1807-9, "almost every man of mark in the State had his price." His object was to uphold authority and preserve the integrity of the kingdom, and, setting aside his private feelings, he employed the means then usual to attain his chief end. He would not ignore or gloss the

great facts. What they were, and the passage is startling when read in 1888, is succinctly stated in a letter to Lord Hawkesbury. "I am positively convinced," he wrote from Dublin in May, 1807, "that no political measure which you could adopt would alter the temper of the people of this country. They are disaffected to the British Government; they don't feel the benefits of their situation; attempts to render it better either do not reach their minds or they are represented to them as additional injuries; and in fact we have no strength here but our army." There is no great change now, despite the removal of grievances; but the maintenance of the Union does not now so much depend upon the army as it does on the resolution of the people of Great Britain. At any rate time has justified the prescience of Arthur Wellesley, who eighty years ago clearly saw the facts and governed himself accordingly. For the rest his policy, as ever, was moderation and conciliation; and among his practical acts was one to establish the Dublin Police, and the suggestion of a measure, subsequently adopted, which rendered the Irish and British Militia available for service anywhere in the United Kingdom. He took civil duty solely on the condition that he should not be precluded from active service, and he insisted on its fulfilment, saying, "No political office could compensate to me the loss of the situation which I held in the army, and nothing shall induce me to give it up." Therefore he sought and he obtained the military employment which best suited his genius.

Napoleon and Alexander of Russia gave him the opportunity of playing a subordinate, yet not obscure

part in the great drama. The Italian genius, who led the French and the nations whom he subjected to them, had almost eclipsed the brightness of Austerlitz by the crushing victory over Prussia at Jena, and in the spring and summer of 1807 he captured Dantzic and overcame the stubborn Russian army in the sanguinary battles of Eylau and Friedland. Driven over the Niemen the Russians were induced to negotiate; the terms of the peace then attained were embodied in the Treaty of Tilsit, and the two Emperors appeared before the world if not as friends—for Napoleon said, alluding to his royal associates, "there are no friends among us"—yet as close allies. He had no open enemy on the continent, and he and his ally settled matters as they pleased in their treaty of peace. But to that instrument there were secret articles, and one of them was that the resources of Denmark, especially her fleet, should be placed in the hands of Napoleon. He hoped also to obtain that of Sweden, and called the King "arch-madman" when he refused. If these ends were gained, then the French Emperor would dispose of a large French, Dutch, Spanish, and Danish naval force, which, combined with that of Russia, would give him sixty sail of the line in the North Sea and the Baltic alone. By some means the secret was revealed to the British Government, and no wonder, for the Russians raged under their defeat and hated the treaty. One day, July 15th, Count Woronzov gave to Lord Castlereagh a letter which had come to hand from Sir Robert Wilson, who was with the Russian court; and on the 19th, only four days afterwards, the British Government resolved to anticipate Napoleon and demand the temporary custody of the Danish ships of war. A

combined naval and military expedition was organised and sent to sea with great promptitude, for by the end of the month it was on its way to Copenhagen. How well the British Government were informed, and how correctly they judged, may be shown from the *Napoleon Correspondence*. One provision made at Tilsit was that the Emperor of Russia should offer to mediate between England and France. On August 2nd Napoleon, who then knew nothing of the British expedition, thus wrote from St. Cloud to Bernadotte, who had an army of Dutch and Spanish troops on the Lower Elbe,—"If England does not accept the mediation of Russia, Denmark must either declare war or I shall declare war on Denmark. In the latter case you will be destined to take possession of 'tout le continent Danois.'" When he learned, some days later, that the expedition had arrived he directed Bernadotte to offer the Crown Prince all the help he might need "to resist the unjust aggression of England." The two despatches form an instructive contrast. It is evident that nothing except the audacious policy of the British Government prevented Napoleon from acquiring what he considered an important naval reinforcement; and the law of self-preservation, which applied with imperative force at that moment, justified them in thwarting a formidable adversary who was master of the continent.

The command of the army, which, including the troops already in the Isle of Rugen, consisted of twenty-seven thousand men, was entrusted to Lord Cathcart, who had for assistants Sir Harry Burrard and Sir David Baird, while the Reserve, four battalions and a few German horse, was under Sir Arthur Wellesley. Lord Cathcart's demands

were refused; the powerful fleet invested the islands; the troops were landed in the middle of the month, north and south of the town, and while Wellesley drove the Danish forces in the field out of Zealand, batteries were erected and the city compelled to endure an awful and destructive bombardment. Thus coerced, Major-General Peyman, the Governor, agreed on September 6th to surrender the fortress, the arsenal, and the fleet; the articles were drawn up the same night by Sir Arthur Wellesley and ratified the next morning. His share in the whole transaction was confined to operations in the field and the negotiation of the surrender entrusted to him by Lord Cathcart. He won golden opinions from the country folk, gentle and simple, because he protected them and punished offenders, keeping his fine brigade in admirable order. There are some passages in his letters which imply that he did not approve of the bombardment, which was so horribly effective. "I acknowledge," he wrote to Lord Hawkesbury, August 28th, "that I should prefer an establishment upon Amag as a more certain mode of forcing a capitulation than a bombardment. In fact, the Danes are fighting only for their credit; it would be disgraceful not to bear a bombardment; but no city with a population of seventy or eighty thousand inhabitants can be expected to hold out when cut off from all supplies of provisions. Besides, I think it behoves us to do as little mischief to the town as possible, and to adopt any mode of reducing it rather than a bombardment." At the same time he admitted that "no man can judge of the propriety of any particular plan of operations so well as the person who conducts them and knows everything." For his part he accepted the parole

of the officers he captured in action, and did all he could to conciliate the inhabitants among whom he moved; and it is at least probable that had he led the expedition its essential object would have been attained by milder, yet not less effective methods. Even conducted as it was it affords a fine example of what a maritime power can do in a brief space of time. The resolve to anticipate Napoleon was taken on July 19th, and by October 20th the fleet and army had returned to England, bringing back fifteen line-of-battle ships, several frigates, and twenty thousand tons of very valuable naval stores; but, as Mr. James remarks, "the benefit to England was not what she had acquired, but what Denmark, that is Napoleon, lost." Wellesley had long preceded his comrades. As there was nothing more to be done, a week after the capitulation he asked for leave to depart, and on the first day of October was dating his letters from "No. 11 Harley Street, London," preparing to face, in Ireland, "the long nights fast approaching," a suggestive phrase too common in the records of that unhappy country.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST RESCUE OF PORTUGAL

EIGHT months afterwards he once more left the Irish Office for the field. Without a foe in arms on the continent, Napoleon, who had long looked on Spain as a dependent ally, soon after he returned from his triumphs at Tilsit set on foot that series of dark and intricate political and military manœuvres which, beginning with the seizure of Portugal, led to the *quasi* captivity of the Bourbons and the proclamation of Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain. No mere caprice induced the Emperor to take a step which had such disastrous consequences. The extension of the dominions of his house was necessary to his system; and he never scrupled to do whatever in his judgment was likely to enlarge and consolidate his empire. The order to form a Corps of Observation at Bayonne was given on July 29th, 1807, its object being then Portugal; on August 19th Junot was named as the commander, and on October 12th he was directed to march for Lisbon, as "in order to anticipate the English there was not a moment to lose." These dates are anterior to the treaty of partition signed at Fontainebleau at the end of the month, and show that the policy applied to the Peninsula had long been de-

signed. Junot, at the head of a Franco-Spanish army, easily occupied Portugal, the King flying to Brazil on his approach. In like manner the several corps sent in his wake into Spain immediately seized the great fortresses, and Murat was master of Madrid in March. King Charles was "induced" to cede his throne to Napoleon, who at once sent his brother Joseph to fill it; but even before he entered the capital the severe repression of a furious revolt in Madrid having set the land aflame, the enraged Spaniards rose and took the field in every province. Napoleon persevered, and poured in more troops; but although Béssières beat Cuesta and Blake at Rio Seco, Dupont surrendered an army to Castanŏs at Baylen, and so great was the terror at Madrid that Joseph hurried away to Burgos, and the first week of August saw him and his whole army behind the Ebro. England heartily and lavishly supported the Spaniards, gave them in abundance arms, ammunition, clothing, money, and finally, sending her soldiers as well as her ships and treasure, she began her great and sustained conflict in the Peninsula with the enormous power of Napoleon. The first army of succour was commanded by Sir Arthur Wellesley.

A small force, collected at Cork for another purpose and suddenly turned upon the Peninsula, it numbered less than ten thousand men. The General, embarking in July, preceded his fleet of transports, and, landing at Coruña, examined the state of affairs for himself. He had the option of operating either in Spain or Portugal, and he selected the latter, because Napoleon had obliged Junot to detach some troops, and that officer could no longer depend upon his Spanish auxiliaries. Resolving

to land forthwith at Mondego Bay, he ordered General Spencer to bring up his division from Cadiz as soon as possible, and prepared to face the conqueror of Portugal. When off the coast at the beginning of August he learned that his army was to be reinforced by Sir John Moore's division, then in Sweden, and some thousands from England. "Several general officers senior to me," he wrote to the Duke of Richmond, had been ordered to sail, and Sir Hew Dalrymple (from Gibraltar) to command the whole army. "I hope," he added, "that I shall have beat Junot before any of them shall arrive, and then they will do as they please with me." In that hope he was disappointed. It is explained that the troops under orders were too many for a Major-General, and that is the reason why he was exposed to an unexpected trial. The Ministers would have trusted him, but the customs of the service were too strong for them.

Wellesley had measured the risk and was prepared to incur it. His information was good, for he estimated Junot's available force at less than twenty thousand men, and the fact was that he had not more than seventeen thousand with which to defend Lisbon, and could not concentrate all these for a battle. The little British army, composed of splendid fighting men, but weak in cavalry and guns, was therefore put ashore on the rocky and wind-beaten coast of Portugal during the first week of August. General Spencer, too, came up from Cadiz in time, having sailed as soon as he heard of Dupont's defeat and before Sir Arthur's orders reached him. Even with his reinforcement, the army was less than fourteen thousand strong, but it was a solid force and eager to encounter the French. The Portuguese in arms,

of no use as soldiers, disposed to be presumptuous, and requiring management, were a moral help rather than a military adjunct. From the Mondego, having the sea and friendly ships on the right, the army started on the 9th for Leiria, a town on the high road from Lisbon to Oporto. That very day, Napoleon at Nantes, desiring to dispel the fears of his brother Joseph, who was then not at Burgos, whither the letter was addressed, but beyond the Ebro, told him that "the English were of little account; they have never more than one-fourth of the numbers they pretend to have. Lord Wellesley has not 4000 men. Besides, they are directed, I believe, upon Portugal." Trusting to his own grand projects for the subjection of Spain, and evidently misinformed, he undervalued the military power of England, which, no doubt, was then an unknown quantity, chiefly because her enormous strength had been frittered away in fantastic expeditions. He also believed, as appears from a letter to Junot, dated two months earlier, that the affairs of Spain would be ended before the winter: another proof that continuous success had taken the edge off his usually accurate judgment and had made him over-confident.

The British descent upon the coast caught Junot unprepared, and the Spanish insurrection had shaken his nerve. As soon as he heard of the landing, he summoned Loison's division from Estremoz on the Spanish frontier, sent out Laborde from Lisbon to support the troops on the high road, ensure if possible a junction with Loison, who had to cross the Tagus at Abrantes, and prepared to follow, if needed, with the reserve. But Wellesley was too quick and resolute. He entered Leiria before Laborde; and before Loison, who was moving by

forced marches, arrived at Santarem on the Tagus, the former General had been compelled to retire upon Roliça, a village near Obidos, covering the road to Torres Vedras. Thus, says Napier, "Sir Arthur's first movement had cut the line of communication" between these Generals, so far that he was able to force Laborde to a battle, while Junot, who had joined Loison at Alcoentre with the reserve, was remote from the field. Having his foe at a disadvantage, Wellesley pressed on through Caldas, and drew up on the 16th at Obidos before Laborde's position. The French General halted there because he did not wish to uncover the road to Lisbon, and also because he thought that Loison might push through the hills and come into line on his right. But Wellesley, not disposed to give time, attacked on the 17th. Moving out of Obidos in the early morning he led himself the bulk of his army and twelve guns upon the heights of Roliça, detached a small Portuguese force under Colonel Trant to threaten the French left, while General Ferguson with two brigades and six guns was sent up the mountain which shut in the valley on the south, to move along the ridge and turn the French right. Thus assailed, Laborde, who has been rightly called a practised warrior, relied on the suppleness as well as the courage of his soldiers, and frustrated the flanking movements by dexterously drawing off to the higher ground on the next terrace of the rugged and wooded hills above a village called Columbeira. The British pursued, still bringing a powerful pressure to bear on the right of the enemy, which he as tenaciously held fast, because on that side lay the line of succour as well as retreat. The combined onset, too impressive to be

withstood, led to hard fighting in the gullies and woods, and some loss, for the foremost British battalions in their eagerness mistook the path, and were driven back before they could form on the crest. But, when the force was developed in front and flank, Laborde, wounded, yet still holding his place in the combat, again drew clear out of the hostile grasp and formed afresh on another eminence. It was his last rally, and as Ferguson came abreast of his right, he glided along the crest and gained the road to Runa, weaker by the loss of three guns and six hundred killed and wounded. The British return gives four hundred killed and wounded and seventy missing. It was a brilliant action, and if the invincible soldiers of Napoleon found out that the Britons could fight, the latter learned that their opponents were brave, adroit, and well commanded.

Wellesley did not pursue. At first he resolved, indeed, to enter the hills by Torres Vedras, but in the evening news came that the brigades of Anstruther and Acland were off the coast, and he took up a position near Vimiero to cover the landing. The reinforcement was a valuable addition to the army. The newcomers landed on the 19th and 20th, in light marching-order—their uniforms and a blanket, a few rations, and sixty rounds of ammunition a man. In that state they went at once to the front and plunged into battle. But it is recorded of these troops that "the men had great joy, for they were relieved of their hair-tying, which was an operation grievous to be borne." A stroke of state had actually abolished the pigtail!

During this halt above Maceira Bay Junot had united and reorganised his troops at Torres Vedras.

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He was still inferior in number, but he had a vast superiority in cavalry, the arm in which the British were deplorably weak. Hoping to surprise his foe, he set forward on the evening of the 20th, but found the road so difficult that his army was not able to emerge from the defile until six o'clock the next morning. The British army had passed the night on a ridge which ran eastward from the sea up to a valley, where stood the village of Vimiero. Above the dip rose a lofty plateau, forming a position which defended all the roads leading from Torres Vedras, and also the road to Lourinha. It stood above the two converging ravines traversed by the water-courses forming the Maceira; and on its left the heights continued for a couple of miles, when they swept backward to the sea. The British had been under arms since daybreak and were alert and prepared.

The march of the French, reported in the night, was indicated in the forenoon first by dust, and next by sprays of horse on the right and columns of foot bending to the left. Then they almost disappeared in the hollows and woods. The General, seeing the drift of the movement, sent Anstruther and Fane over the valley to hold the hill above Vimiero, directed Ferguson, Nightingale, Bowes, and Acland, to form on the left, but kept Hill as a reserve on the eminence where he had bivouacked, behind the right. These operations were still in progress when the battle began by a fierce advance on the position held by Fane and Anstruther. The French dashed forward with their usual impetuosity and drove back the Ninety-seventh, but were brought to a stand by that regiment combined with a flank attack from the Fifty-second. Next Laborde tried to pass the

left of Fane, but he brought his guns to bear with terrible effect, and the Fiftieth charging with a will, the column was shattered. Then Kellerman threw a body of grenadiers into the fray, compelling the Forty-third to give ground, but again they fell under the fire of artillery, and the Forty-third rallying bore furiously down upon the head of the column, and with a short but fierce struggle drove it back in confusion. The Twentieth Light Dragoons, two hundred sabres, dashed into the disordered crowd, but Margaron, galloping up at the head of the French horse, routed the hardy Dragoons and killed their colonel. Practically, the battle was now over on this side, but it still raged on the British left. For Junot had sent two brigades to turn it, not knowing the obstacles in the way, how strong the ground was and how well filled. Solignac's brigade, coming along the crest, was crushed by Ferguson's infantry, its commander wounded and six guns taken; but Brenier, who had been struggling all the morning in the ravines below the ridge, suddenly broke out upon the flank of the British advance and recaptured the guns. The astonished troops quickly rallied, turned heavily on this unexpected foe, and not only defeated his column and recovered the lost guns, but captured Brenier. It was only noon, so sharp as well as swift had been the fight. The French divisions were cut asunder, and they had no reserves at hand, for all had been engaged. Wellesley, who had closely watched the battle, knew this, and now desired to complete his victory by pushing Junot into the valley of the Tagus, and by occupying the mountains to cut him off from Lisbon. But here Sir Harry Burrard took command, stopped the army, saved Solignac from

capture by Ferguson and Junot from pursuit. The pause of a moment enabled the quick French troops to gather themselves up and regain Torres Vedras. Their loss was one general, two thousand men, and thirteen guns; the British, seven hundred and twenty.

Wellesley's share in the campaign of Portugal ended about noon on the 21st, when, for what he admitted to be fair military reasons, Burrard, on taking command, declined to accept his plans. His original design, formed as early as August 8th, was to move Sir John Moore's division from Mondego upon Santarem, so as to cut off the retreat of the French upon Elvas, and turn the line of Torres Vedras by the Tagus; but Sir Harry Burrard objected; when the third commander, Sir Hew Dalrymple, landed on the 22nd, he agreed with Burrard, and Moore was ordered to land at Maceira. Nevertheless Sir Hew agreed to march the next day, but in the afternoon General Kellerman arrived with a flag of truce, opened negotiations for the evacuation of Portugal by the French army, and was actually allowed to draw up himself the terms of suspension of hostilities pending the settlement of a definite convention. Wellesley signed it at the request of Sir Hew. He says that "it was negotiated by the General himself in my presence and that of Sir Harry Burrard, and, after it had been drawn up by Kellerman himself, Sir Hew directed me to sign it;" but he did not approve of it, and only put his name to the document out of deference to the Commander-in-Chief, and "to avoid being considered the head of a party against his authority." He regretted afterwards that he had signed it, even for such reasons, and was so deeply impressed by the waste of fine opportunities that he

described himself privately to the Duke of Richmond as sick of all that was going on.

Nor was his feeling unreasonable. He had commanded the army, won two actions, and was not permitted to reap the fruits of his skill and energy. As a matter of fact the command was taken from him on the morning of the 20th, for then Sir Harry, who was on board ship, directed him to halt on the 21st, "for which day I had ordered the army to march." So that, had Junot succeeded in surprising Wellesley on that morning, it would not have been his fault. "I took the command in the battle" (of Vimiero), he says, "because Sir Harry was still in his ship, and because, if he had been on the ground, he could have done nothing." In fact, he won the battle for the other generals, and then fell back into a subordinate position. When the Convention, finally signed at Lisbon and not at Cintra, was known in England, there was an outburst of wrath, which at first fell in all its fury on Sir Arthur and greatly vexed him. But he would not attack Sir Harry, and, although Sir Hew accused him of imprudence and temerity, and otherwise assailed him, he said, "I have thought it but just and fair to Sir H. Dalrymple to avow that I was of opinion that the French ought to be allowed to evacuate Portugal," as matters stood after Moore had been directed to re-embark the men he landed at Mondego in order to march on Santarem. If that had not been done, and if his own plans, which were sound, had been carried out, "we should have been some days ago," he wrote to Ferguson on August 29th, "in a situation to have refused to the French any capitulation excepting on the terms of their laying down their arms." Whether that would

have been so or not can never be known, for the plan was not tried; but in any case, no blame for the Convention can rest on the man who, after winning the battles which broke the spirit of the French, was cut short in a victorious career by generals of lesser ability, who frustrated his plans and did negotiate the Convention. On the whole, even if we agree with Napier that "the Convention was a great and solid advantage for the Allies, a blunder on the part of the French," it must be admitted that Wellesley's far-reaching and vigorous designs were never tested; and that, considering his genius, he might well have achieved the large ends he had in view, captured the Army of Portugal, and held fast the country as he did in after years. As matters fell out, he was exposed to public odium for offences which he did not commit, and had to appear before a Court of Inquiry to defend what he had not done. In the end he was vindicated, and the whole transaction now stands on record as only one among many examples of the blunders of which governments, nations, and armies may be guilty, when, without knowledge or capacity, and tied up with too much red tape, they plunge into the tremendous hazards of warfare, and make their interests and passions the judges of methods and results.

Wellesley left the army on September 20th, bearing with him the affectionate regards of his officers, and arrived in London early in October. He at once visited Lord Castlereagh, and Sir Hew being recalled, he learned to his delight that Sir John Moore, whom he greatly esteemed, had been appointed to lead the army into Spain. "I find," he wrote to Moore, "that I am

placed under your command, than which nothing can be more satisfactory to me." He hoped to join him at once, but the inquiry at Chelsea anent the Convention detained him in London until December; and thus his destiny was not Coruña, but Dublin Castle.

CHAPTER VI

THE SECOND RESCUE OF PORTUGAL

THE winter of 1808-9 was marked by a great calamity, but one which had its compensations. Sir John Moore, who drove into the heart of northern Spain at the head of a small army, was compelled to retreat before the overwhelming numbers and masterful combinations of Napoleon, and died a hero's death at Coruña. Although he was not aided by the Spaniards, he saved the south of Spain for the moment from invasion, and arrested the march of armies upon the weak British and Portuguese force left to guard the town and the harbour of Lisbon. King Joseph re-entered Madrid; the French armies were strongly posted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, from the Bay of Biscay to the Tagus. The fierce spirit of resistance was still unquenched, even by the smoking and ensanguined ruins of Saragossa; yet before the last British soldier had embarked from Coruña, or Saragossa had capitulated, Napoleon told his brother Jerome that the affairs of Spain were ended. So liable are men of great genius to miscalculation. He remained at Valladolid until January 17th, and then started for Paris to enter on a fresh struggle with Austria for which he had long been preparing. "What waters do they drink in Vienna," he ironically

asked, "those of the Danube or the river of Lethe?" And again, "if the Emperor of Austria makes the least movement, he will soon have ceased to reign." The offence of Austria was that she would not be sufficiently submissive; she "intrigued" with England, as was natural; she raised a considerable army, and was resolved to fight once more, for she was not yet a vassal state. Nor can it be doubted that Napoleon resented symptoms of independence which seemed likely to embarrass his projects in Spain as well as in Germany. "In a few months," he wrote to the Saxon King in February, "the matter will be decided, either by the disarming of Austria and the re-establishment of her army on a peace footing, or by war, which will be followed by the ruin of this grand and ancient monarchy." England would not make peace, he insisted, so long as she had the means of troubling the continent, and "the continent will not be tranquil so long as Austria is in opposition to us." In this spirit he plunged into a carefully prepared war with Austria; his draughts of soldiers from Spain lessened the stress upon the Peninsula; and he quitted that country, never to return, although he retained a villa at Madrid for his use should he again cross the Pyrenees. He set out from Paris on April 14th, and on that day Sir Arthur Wellesley, driven back to Portsmouth by a tempest in the Channel, was waiting a fair wind to sail for Lisbon.

Sir John Moore's campaign and its result perplexed the Government, gave arms to the Opposition which they freely used, and sobered the enthusiasm but did not shake the resolution of the British people. If the Ministers, burdened by an enormous task, appeared to

shrink from the contest in the Peninsula, their better judgment soon regained its ascendency, and perhaps it was Lord Castlereagh's confidence in Wellesley that produced this fortunate effect. Maturely reflecting on the facts, Sir Arthur drew up a memorandum, in which he firmly maintained that whatever might be the issue of the conflict between Napoleon and the Spanish people, Portugal at least could be defended, and Portuguese troops raised and disciplined until they could face the French. He stood alone, or almost alone, in looking on Lisbon as the best base of operations, while others preferred the apparent but delusive advantages of Cadiz and Gibraltar; and his opinions were so clearly and cogently expounded, that the Cabinet yielded in the end, and he was appointed to command the army, if on arriving at Lisbon he thought it expedient to do so. The post was then held by Sir John Cradock; and if he were found to be successfully engaged in the field, Sir Arthur said he could not reconcile it to his feelings to supersede him and send him to Gibraltar as Governor. He sailed on the 16th, landed at Lisbon on the 22nd, and, as no fresh incident had happened, he relieved Sir John and practically assumed command on April 24th, 1809. Then he began that series of operations which not only defended Portugal, but carried his flag from the Rock of Lisbon to the walls of Toulouse.

The spirit of the nation rose at once when he appeared in the streets of Lisbon, and added tenfold to the moral force exerted on the side of the Allies. Sir John Cradock had maintained himself courageously with very small means when he was for weeks left without

instructions of any kind, and he took the prudent resolution of securing a feasible retreat by preparing a place of embarkation. The defeat of Moore, an advance of Soult to Oporto, the presence of Victor on the Tagus, and the apathy of the Portuguese, were so many dangers which he confronted with manly constancy. As time went on there were some alleviations. More troops trickled in from England. The Portuguese regency offered the command of their army to a British officer; they wished to have Wellesley, but he declined the post, and it fell to Beresford, who had a talent for organisation. Finally, the French neither advanced across the Tagus within the borders of Portugal, nor pushed on from the Douro to Lisbon. But no one would set the military capacity of Cradock in rivalry with that of Wellesley, and the Government, so fiercely assailed, deserves at least the credit of selecting him. Soon after he landed the Portuguese named him Marshal-General, which gave him a solid hold upon the troops and resources of the country: so strong was their confidence, a confidence which in a few weeks he justified abundantly.

It was five days after landing that he publicly notified his assumption of command, and on May 2nd he was in the field at the head of five and twenty thousand men, nine thousand of whom were Portuguese, and thirty guns. His first step was to organise his commissariat and assure the people that all provisions, supplies, and means of transport would be paid for. His next to decide on the line of operations. There were two enemies before him—Soult at Oporto, well within reach, and Victor, remote, yet more dangerous in appearance because he had a road to Lisbon, if he dared

to follow it, and the means if he thought fit to use them. But Victor was far up the Tagus valley; to fight him, concert with the quarrelsome Spanish chief Cuesta was needed, which would take time, while Soult, close by, held rich provinces and a great city; he was cut off from Victor by the mountains and the partisans, and if the abler Marshal could be defeated swiftly, the other could be dealt with later. Wellesley, therefore, determined to organise a line of defence upon the right bank of the Tagus, sufficient to delay Victor if he came on, and with the main body to strike boldly at Oporto. There were other reasons for attacking Soult, for a French officer visited the camp and revealed the fact that he and several comrades wished to depose the Marshal, who, having taken on himself the title of Governor-General of Portugal, was called by the soldiers in derision Nicholas the First. In that military conspiracy, really directed against Napoleon, there was not much depth, but it indicated a loosening of the bonds of discipline and a species of disloyalty very discreditable to soldiers. Wellesley refused point blank to regulate his operations by any such contrivances, and the officer returned across the Douro, where, his machinations being discovered, he was arrested but escaped. At his last visit to the British head-quarters, Napier tells us, the traitor, by the orders of Sir Arthur, was conducted through by-paths, so that he saw little, and thus, when questioned by Soult, he led him to believe that the hostile army could not move for several days. All this told against Soult. He did not know that an army was close upon him at a moment when the disposition of his own troops favoured an attack. His main body was at Oporto and on the

Tamego, separated by the Douro from the infantry and horsemen under Mermet and Franceschi, who were posted between the Douro and the Vouga. Wellesley had his army at Coimbra on the Mondego, and his plan was to hold the French left in check with the Portuguese, supported by a British detachment under Beresford, and to surprise if possible and overwhelm the right, whose only line of retreat lay by the boat-bridge at Oporto. Beresford, therefore, marched east of the Sierra in which the Vouga rises, and Wellesley on the 7th with sixteen thousand men moved along the high road between the sea and the hills, reaching the river on the 9th, the troops having halted one day to give Beresford time to arrive on the Upper Douro.

Franceschi, at Albergaria Nova, had no notion that an army was within a few miles of his camp, and the object was to surprise him. To effect this Hill was sent in boats from Aveiro to Ovar at the head of an inlet of the sea; Paget and Sherbrooke marched by the bridge over the Vouga; while Trant, commanding a Portuguese party, was pushed out to turn the French right, and Cotton with the British horse was directed on the left. Accidents thwarted the plan, Trant coming on an impassable ravine, and Cotton being misled by guides; so that on one flank Franceschi was not turned, and on the other Cotton came full on his horse and foot by day, and had to halt. Even then the brilliant Italian did not know how large a force was near, but soon Wellesley came up, and drove off the infantry, yet could not reach the horse, which adroitly withdrew at dark to Grijon. Here the French fought on the 11th for their line of retreat, but not long, as their position was easily turned;

yet again they escaped the grasp of the assailant, and moving all day got safely over the Douro, for once more orders miscarried and accidents occurred, so that the project of smashing the French right south of the Douro failed of its full effect.

Nevertheless, the surprise of Soult was complete, and he seems to have trusted to the unfordable Douro for such brief protection as would give him time to slip away. His intention was to retreat by Amarante into the Salamanca country, towards which he sent his heavy impedimenta; and he did not know that Beresford had driven Loison over the Tamega, and that this General, so hated by the Portuguese, had fallen back to Guimaraens, leaving the Allies in possession of the river passage. So he determined to defend the Douro, and not to march until the 13th. The wished-for delay was not granted to him by his adversary. Bringing the army up to the river early on the 12th, Wellesley eagerly sought the means of crossing. Opposite Oporto the stream flows round a high bluff, the Serra, which overhangs it like a bastion and bears, or bore, a convent. Under this on the eastern face the troops were collected, hidden by the mass from the city. From the summit Wellesley gazed on the deep broad river and the further bank, meditating how to secure the transit for his ardent and hardy soldiers. He quickly observed an isolated building in an enclosure on the opposite shore, having walls on three sides, open to the river on the fourth, and accessible from the city by one gate only. Could boats be obtained—Soult had drawn them all to the right bank—the troops, sheltered by the bluff, would be able for a time at least to pass unseen. Wellesley therefore sent General John

Murray with the Germans up the river to Avintas, to cross there, and planting a battery on the bluff sought for boats. By the aid of a Portuguese Colonel Waters found them; three barges were got from the other side, and when he knew that Murray had also obtained some craft, Wellesley gave the signal for the troops to cross. That work was deftly done, and solid possession of the enclosure obtained before the French detected the movement. Then they dashed up, opened a heavy fire and wounded General Paget, whose place was taken by Hill, but could make no impression in front, nor try the flanks, because Wellesley's guns swept the approaches. For some time three battalions stood alone beyond the river and sustained the furious assault. At last Murray was seen moving down the right bank; the townsfolk sent over boats to Sherbrooke's men at a point below the bluff; the uproar in the city indicated a retreat, the French were visibly marching towards Vallonga under a heavy fire, and Sherbrooke, at length over the river, issued from the city and pressed on the rear. Murray did not attack or even fire, as he should have done, on the retiring columns, who were only molested by two squadrons of the Fourteenth Light Dragoons, led by Brigadier Charles Stewart and Major Hervey. The passage of the Douro, a brilliant action in the face of an enemy, cost the British twenty killed and ninety-six wounded. The French lost five hundred killed and wounded, and five guns, besides fifty without carriages found in the arsenal.

Too much is often expected not only from a general, but from his soldiers, whom exacting censors should remember are also human beings. Wellesley halted one day at Oporto, not only because he had to bring his

baggage and stores over a wide stream, but because his men had marched eighty miles in four days. On the 14th he started for Brága, where he hoped to intercept Soult, who, he heard, had destroyed his guns and ammunition and crossed the hills towards Braga. That was true, but not all the truth. Finding to his dismay that Loison had abandoned Amarante, Soult, on the 13th, got rid of every encumbrance and, taking a mountain pathway up the course of a torrent, by his quenchless energy urged the wearied troops over the Sierra to Guimaraens, where he had the good fortune to assemble the whole of his army. Then he destroyed the guns belonging to Loison and Lorge, and turning to the right once more plunged into the hills. He made for Montalegre on the road to Orense, outstripping pursuit, securing by daring efforts possession of two narrow bridges over the torrents in his way, crossing Montalegre on the 17th, two days after filing over the frontier near Allaritz, and the next entering Orense. Wellesley had failed to overtake any part of his fugitive force except a rear-guard, and neither Beresford nor the Portuguese partisans had been able to cut him off. He owed his escape entirely to himself; he made his exit from Portugal without a gun, but he escaped a fate which, at one moment, seemed inevitable—capitulation in the open field. If his renown was not diminished, how much that of his opponent was increased! Sir Arthur landed at Lisbon on April 22nd; he began his forward march on May 7th, and twelve days afterwards, so resolute as well as swift were his movements, not a single French soldier remained on the soil of Portugal. Moreover, Soult had been driven into Galicia, and was separated by a wide interval from

Victor, whose threatening position in the Tagus valley ceased to be an immediate danger.

He was now the object of attack. In the midst of the operations against Soult, the Duke of Belluno had made a show of passing the Tagus at Alcantara, which led to the destruction of the bridge, set General Mackenzie in motion from Abrantes, and made Wellesley, when the intelligence reached him, turn a part of his army southward. But Victor, hearing of Soult's defeat, at once filed over the boat-bridge of Almaraz and took post at Plasencia on the Alagon, covering the road to Madrid; so that by the time Wellesley's army had marched to Abrantes the French in the Tagus valley were reduced to the defensive. There had been a brief period, before Victor's retreat, when it seemed possible to strike him between the Guadiana and the Tagus; but Cuesta as usual was intractable, nothing could be done, and Victor got away. Sir Arthur was about to have his first experience of Spanish temper and Spanish bad faith.

Towards the end of June the various armies which exerted an influence upon the immediate field of action were spread over a wide extent of territory. Three French corps in the north, the Second, Fifth, and Sixth, commanded by Laborde, Mortier, and Ney, had just been placed by Napoleon under the command of Soult as the senior officer, with orders to act together, only together and not in fractions. They were to "advance on the English, pursue them without cessation, beat them, and fling them into the sea." Writing on June 11th from Schönbrunn, he said to his generals: "the English alone are redoubtable—they alone; if the army is not differently managed, before the lapse of a few months

they will bring upon it a catastrophe." Unfortunately Ney and Soult were bitter enemies, and it was difficult to effect a hearty co-operation. Soult, having designs against Ciudad Rodrigo, moved on Zamora, calling up Mortier; and Ney, feeling that he was deserted, abandoned Galicia entirely, and went to Astorga, reaching that town at the end of June; two days later, Soult entered Zamora. The point to notice is that these corps, more than fifty thousand strong, were separated from the Tagus valley only by the mountains of Bejar. About the same time King Joseph and Jourdan, his adviser, were in Madrid; Sebastiani was watching the Spanish general Venegas, who lurked in the Sierra Morena; Victor was at Plasencia, facing Cuesta, who had come from the Guadiana to the Tagus; and Wellesley was at Abrantes, striving to gain the assent of Cuesta to some reasonable plan. At length it was agreed that these two should effect a junction on the right bank, and that, to aid this movement, Venegas should advance across the upper Tagus and threaten Madrid.

It was on June 27th, 1809, that the British army, about twenty-one thousand men and thirty guns, marched from Abrantes in two columns upon Castello Branco, where they merged in one, and headed for Plasencia, which was reached on July 10th. That very day Wellesley went to Mirabete and had a long conference with Cuesta, which ended in some sort of agreement. The British commander was alive, yet not sufficiently alive to the danger which threatened from the side of Bejar, and sent Beresford to Perales; Cuesta grudgingly undertook to watch the pass of Banos, but only sent thither an inadequate force. Wellesley at this time, and even

later, underrated the power which Soult might bring to bear, not knowing that he had so far recovered from his beating, and that he had three corps under his orders. He therefore persevered in the offensive, trusting over much to the Spaniards, whose troops, it turned out, would not stand fire, and whose Junta fulfilled none of its promises to furnish transport and supplies.

The advance from Abrantes, the approach of Cuesta to the Tagus at Almaraz, and the presence of Sir Robert Wilson's partisan corps near Madrid, had induced Victor to retire, first to Talavera and then behind the Alberche, where he was on June 28th, so that the junction of the British and Spanish armies was effected without molestation of any kind. Wellesley was at Oropeza on July 20th, and Cuesta in his front at Vellada. But here new perils arose. The Spaniards, who undertook to furnish food and transport, had provided neither, and the army was already on half rations. The consequence was that Sir Arthur declared that he would not pass the Alberche, a threat he had to reiterate later, unless promises were redeemed and his wants were supplied. The threat produced no effect, and the safety of the allied army depended upon fasting troops! Victor had now so posted his men that he covered the line of retreat upon Madrid through Toledo, which could not be assailed, and awaited the movements of the Allies with the more confidence because he learned their plans from his spies on Cuesta's staff. Rarely has any general been in a more embarrassing position than Sir Arthur at this moment; for when the fairest chances of overthrowing the French were presented, the Spaniard sulked, and when they were few or none he was eager to fall on.

Wellesley, for example, as early as July 22nd, rode over the river, and from the southern heights took a survey of the French position. He saw that it was pregnable and devised a plan, but Cuesta took to his bed, and the great opportunity was lost. Then, when Victor shifted his divisions a little to the rear, Cuesta followed on the 24th, but the French had gone out of reach.

Two days later he got within their grasp, for he moved recklessly on, and when they turned upon him on the 26th beyond the Alberche, he would have been cut to pieces at Alcabon, had not Wellesley placed two divisions and some cavalry on the left of that stream, the sight of whom stopped the French. This offensive stroke, though not pushed home, implied that the enemy had recovered confidence. The reason was that Joseph, providing for the defence of Madrid, and summoning Sebastiani from La Mancha, had marched out to join Victor, and did so on the 25th behind the Guadarama. He had also, through General Foy, given Soult the permission he sought to advance by the pass of Banos upon Plasencia, and lead thither all his corps. The peril which beset Wellesley will now be understood. He was far into Spain, acting beside, it can hardly be said in concert with, a most ill-conditioned and dangerous ally. In his front everything that could be spared from Madrid had been thrust into the valley, a result rendered possible by the treachery of the Junta, which, jealous of Cuesta, had ordered Venegas not to push for the capital. On his left rear, but still north of the hills, unknown to him, were three French corps, pointing to roads which cut in on his line of retreat as well as his flank. And his army was half starved by the rulers of

the people he was there to aid! It was with the greatest difficulty that Cuesta, fresh from his risk at Alcabon, could be induced to cross the Alberche and take post at Talavera; nor was he persuaded until, as he said, he "made the proud Englishman go down on his knees."

Wellesley then, leaving a strong guard on the Alberche, made ready to fight a battle at Talavera. He had, nominally, fifty-four thousand men and a hundred guns, but only nineteen thousand trusty soldiers, his British and Germans. The French came on with some fifty thousand veterans and eighty guns. Wellesley placed the Spaniards on the right, in the partially fortified town of Talavera, which was close to the river, and his own brigades on the hills extending northward, and ending in a loftier eminence overhanging a narrow valley beyond which were the mountains. The troops, from right to left, were Campbell's, Sherbrooke's, and the German Legion, with Donkin's brigade on the bluff which was the key of the position, Hill and the horse in the rear. Early on the morning of the 27th, Mackenzie was still at the front when the French broke over the stream; they surprised the British outposts, bearing down with such speed that Sir Arthur was nearly captured. He rode up from Talavera at the first news, says Sir Samford Whittingham. "We advanced into the midst of our skirmishers. The fire was hot, and the enemy rapidly approaching. Sir Arthur leaped off his horse and scrambled up the wall of an old ruin close at hand. But he was obliged to throw himself down on his hands and knees and remount instantly, for the enemy's sharpshooters had nearly surrounded the building, and a minute's delay would have constituted him

a prisoner." The French were checked by the Forty-fifth, "a stubborn old regiment," some companies of the Sixtieth, and the personal efforts of the commander. They lost some hundreds in the confusion, but retreated, nevertheless, through the cork trees and olives to the position, where Mackenzie halted behind the centre. This inauspicious beginning was followed by a stroke from Victor which almost ruined his adversary. While a feint by the French horse on the town side sent the Spaniards flying by thousands, and the peril was only averted by Sir Arthur, who brought up some English horse and those Spaniards who did not run, Victor appeared on the allied left, and opened fire from his guns. He saw that the great hill was imperfectly occupied, and being familiar with the ground, he knew the value of that post, and tried to surprise and overwhelm its defenders. Just as the twilight was at hand, he ordered Ruffin with a whole division to storm in upon Donkin's brigade. For a moment the chance was in favour of the French. They crowned the hill, steep as it was, for their numbers enabled them to turn the British brigade; but, just as they were exulting in success, General Hill brought up the Twenty-ninth Foot, which charged home, and the intruders were roughly expelled. The Forty-eighth and a scratch battalion followed, and were in time to break the force and finally rout a second French attack, made in the growing darkness with a larger force and pushed with great resolution. The left centre, German Legion, had also been assailed, and although the French were worsted, indeed lost a thousand men, they had tested the weakness as well as the strength of the line, and were prepared for the trials of the morrow.

It is a peculiarity of the conflict near Talavera that it was divided into several acts. The severe combat in the gloaming of the 27th was renewed at daybreak. Ruffin, supported by Vilatte, once more dashed forward, this time on a broad front which turned the shoulder of the hill. His march was covered by artillery fire, and his hardy men went on determined to win, but they were met with greater resolution by the soldiers of Donkin and Hill, who did not run when turned, and who finally prevailed, forcing their adversaries down the steeps with the loss of fifteen hundred men. Then the guns from the opposite hills renewed their tearing cannonade, and the wearied and shattered assailants regained their former lines. The desperate attack showed Wellesley that he must farther strengthen his left, which he did by placing Bassecour's Spanish cavalry, begged from Cuesta, beyond, and a body of horse, British and German, facing the valley. They were soon after joined by Albuquerque, who hated his own stupid commander.

Now ensued a pause. The soldiers of both armies gathered on the banks of the rivulet in the ravine to drink, while the French Generals held a council, when Jourdan urged the King to retire behind the Alberche and wait for Soult, who was coming south from Salamanca. He was to have been at Plasencia on the 31st, but during the high debate a letter from Soult showed that he could not be there until the 2nd or even the 5th of August. News also came in that Venegas had at length marched, and had approached Toledo; and swayed by fear of an attack on Madrid and Victor's eagerness to fight, the King rejected the prudent advice of Jourdan and allowed the battle to be renewed. At this time

Wellesley, seated on the lofty hill, received through Donkin a message from Albuquerque to the effect that Cuesta was a traitor. He was intently watching the motions of his adversaries, and, says Napier, he "listened to this somewhat startling message without so much as turning his head, and then drily answering, 'Very well, you may return to your brigade,' continued his survey of the French." In after years Wellington did not remember the incident, and Lord Stanhope says he evidently did not believe a story which, if not *vrai*, is certainly *vraisemblable*.

The stress of the battle was yet to come; it was resumed after mid-day and continued with great violence for more than five hours. Victor's plan was to turn the left and break in the centre. He directed Ruffin to turn the left by the valley, while half Vilatte's division went against the Key-hill, and Sebastiani's men fell on the troops between its summit and the Spaniards about Talavera. This latter body, preceded by a terrible fire from the French guns, dashed upon Campbell's division and fared ill, for their fierce onset was met by a fiercer counterstroke, in which Mackenzie and some Spaniards joined, and the French were not only routed, but ten guns were captured, while an attempt to rally in the olive groves and charge again was quickly frustrated. Nor did better fortune befall the French right attack, for seeing the troops coming on, Wellesley sent against them Anson's cavalry. The German Hussars were stopped by a deep chasm, but the Twenty-third Light Dragoons came upon an easier passage, and, headed by John Elley and Frederick Ponsonby, rode through Vilatte's columns, charged Strolz's French horse brigade beyond the

astonished infantry, and were only beaten when, exhausted, they in turn were charged by Polish Lancers and German troopers drawn by Victor from the reserve. The heroic Twenty-third lost Colonel Seymour and more than two hundred men, and the survivors found shelter with Bassecour's Spaniards; but the audacious charge of the regiment was so impressive that it actually arrested the turning movement of Ruffin up the valley. The great hill was untouched, and thence Wellesley watched the eddying fight. For the centre was again ravaged by cannon and assailed by infantry. The storm this time fell on the Germans and the Guards; they threw it back, but the Guards pursuing hotly were struck in front and flank, and the French reserves pressing on, the whole fell into confusion. Wellesley, who saw the error of the pursuit, sent down from his eyry the Forty-eighth Foot under Colonel Donellan, and Cotton's cavalry, as he says without orders, moved up. They arrived just in time, for the centre was broken. Donellan led his infantry into the tumultuous throng, which, says Napier, "seemed sufficient to carry it away bodily; but wheeling back by companies that regiment let the crowds pass through, and then resuming its proud and beautiful line fell on the flank of the victorious French column, plying them with such a destructive musketry, and closing up on them with such a firm and regular step, that their offensive movement was checked." The broken troops reformed, Cotton's light cavalry, two squadrons only, charged, the guns did their work, and the centre was once more solid and impenetrable. No fresh attempt was made by the French, who, worsted at all points, drew off under the protection of their batteries and light troops. The

sanguinary battle was won. The British loss in the several actions was more than six thousand, and that of the French, two generals and upwards of seven thousand. Two British generals, Langworth and Mackenzie, were killed, and three were wounded. Ten guns were captured in the fight, and seven more were found in the woods the next day, when Victor retired over the Alberche.

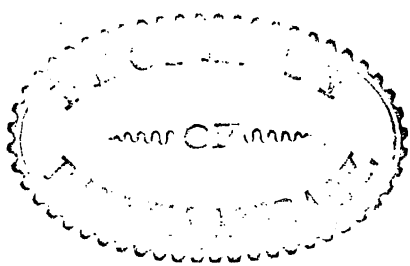
Talavera must rank with the great actions recorded in British annals, because, compared with their assailants, the real defenders of the position were so few, and made good the deficiency by freely sacrificing their lives. It is an example of tenacity, the only misfortune of the day arose when the valour of the Guards got the better of their discretion. But it was a general's as well as a soldier's battle, for the watchful commander was the soul of the fight. Some have pretended that, after all, it was a French victory. Napoleon, if his testimony be needed, may be allowed to decide that question. Writing from Schönbrunn, August 25th, he says, "Tell the King that I see with pain how he calls his soldiers conquerors; and that the fact is, I have lost the battle of Talavera." Publicly he held another language, but privately he spoke the truth.

Foiled on the field, and fearing that Venegas on one side and Wilson on the other might reach Madrid, King Joseph marched away on the 29th to save the capital. Victor remained in the valley alert, and ready to retire at the first sign of danger, and a fine reinforcement reached the British army. General Robert Crawford, leading the Fifty-second, the Forty-third, and the Ninety-fifth, the nucleus of the coming Light Division, passed over

the battlefield and took outpost duty, having marched in a July heat sixty-two miles in twenty-six hours. One peril had been averted, another was close at hand. On the very day of the battle, Soult began his advance upon Plasencia, and as the Spaniards fled from Banos without firing a shot, the leading columns of the Fifth Corps entered the town on the 31st. Wellesley heard of Soult's march on the day before, and a little later that he was in the valley. Leaving Cuesta in Talavera to protect and send away the wounded, he set out himself with his own army to combat the French Marshal, not knowing even then that three corps were moving through the hills. Cuesta was better informed, but concealed his knowledge, and it was only when the British chief reached Oropeza on August 3rd that he discovered how great was the risk he ran. For he acquired the knowledge that fifty thousand Frenchmen were pressing forward, that Soult's dragoons were over the Tietar not far from the bridge at Almaraz, and that Cuesta had determined to quit Talavera at once, and abandon the hospitals full of sick and wounded. The crisis was sharp, but Sir Arthur, cool and quiet, took an instant decision. The Don now wanted to fight at Oropeza, which must have been ruinous, especially as his army was not strong in battle; and as he would not stir, at daybreak on the 4th the British army alone filed over the bridge of Arzobispo and gained the Col de Mirabete, which ensured a line of retreat to Badajoz. Crawford's active Light Brigade, at the same time, passed the rugged hills on the left bank, and stood on the 5th masters of the bridge of Almaraz, rapid movements which foiled Soult and made all secure. Cuesta also managed to

pass the river, yet had a narrow escape; and two days afterwards his post on the Tagus was surprised, and his army in flight to Deleztoza. There was no end to the embarrassment caused by this incapable and crabbed officer, and had not Wellesley interfered he would have done more mischief and lost half his guns. By August 11th the Allies were in line once more, and the next day Cuesta resigned, his place being taken by Eguia. In the enemy's camps the old discord broke out between Ney and Soult, and the several corps soon separated, one remaining at Plasencia and another at Talavera, while Ney went to Valladolid, beating Wilson on the way, and Victor joined the King. Napoleon, in Austria, was enraged at the whole series of operations. He condemned Soult's march on Plasencia, and insisted fiercely that the corps in the north should have joined the King through Madrid and have operated in a mass—the only road to success, he said, in a country where lines of communication are insecure. He wrote thus to Clarke from Schönbrunn, August 15th: "The plan of directing Marshal Soult on Plasencia is faulty and contrary to all rule. It has every inconvenience, and no advantage. 1. The English army can pass the Tagus, support itself upon Badajoz, and from that moment has no fear of Marshal Soult. 2. It may beat both armies in detail. If, on the contrary, Soult and Mortier had moved on Madrid they would have been there by the 30th, and the army, united by August 15th, could have given battle and conquered Spain and Portugal." Sir Arthur justified the foresight of Napoleon to the letter. He not only crossed the Tagus, but when the conduct of the Spanish Junta could no longer be borne—their soldiers

plundered his baggage and even fired on his foragers, while they withheld supplies and transport—he fell back to the neighbourhood of Badajoz, whence he had secure communications with Lisbon. His brother Lord Wellesley was now ambassador at Seville, but his great influence was exerted in vain. "I am worked like a galley slave," he writes, "and can effect nothing;" and Sir Arthur, now Viscount Wellington and Baron Douro, surveying the whole position of affairs, and seeing into the heart of them as clearly as Napoleon, resolved to trust in future to his own resources, and hold fast by his great original idea of defending the Peninsula in Portugal with his British troops and growing Portuguese army. The Seville Junta gave him the title of Captain-General, which he accepted, but, with his marked disinterestedness, vindicating as he had done before in Portugal his brother Henry's words about his indifference to money, he refused the pay of the rank conferred; just as later, when they gave him an estate, he paid the rents into the Treasury during the war. At home, the Portland Government had been broken up, Canning and Castlereagh had fought a duel, the public mind was seething with rage over the Walcheren failure, which might have been a success, and the scandals affecting the Duke of York. Wellington, who did not escape the insults of faction and the wrath of ignorance, remained unmoved, and unremittingly walked in the path of his duty, supported faithfully by Lord Liverpool, who succeeded Castlereagh as Minister of War.



CHAPTER VII

THE LAST CAMPAIGN IN PORTUGAL

This autumn of 1809 may be regarded as the turning-point in his career. For it was then that he resolved to create those Lines of Torres Vedras which proved such a bitter surprise to the French army. He went to Lisbon in the beginning of October and finally settled that important matter, and then travelled to Seville, where he conferred with his elder brother, then about to depart for England and accept office as Minister for Foreign Affairs. By the middle of November he was again in Badajoz, and a letter which he sent thence to Lord Liverpool shows how distinctly he foresaw the tempest against which the shelter of the Lines was prepared. At the end of July, before he knew what had happened at Talavera, Napoleon from Schönbrunn directed Clarke to stop any movement upon Portugal, but to prepare for an expedition in the following February. Wellington did not know of this, nor was he aware that on October 7th, 1809, Napoleon, now at peace with Austria, though still in her capital, notified to his Minister of War that in December one hundred thousand men should be collected between Bayonne and Orleans, and that he himself would lead these vast reinforcements into Spain. With what object? A fortnight earlier, in the dispatch ap-

pointing Soult Major-General of his army in Spain, he says: "The King having no experience in war, my intention is that, until I arrive, you should be responsible. I wish myself to enter Lisbon as soon as possible." How did Wellington look on the same situation? "The enemy ought to make the possession of Portugal their first object when their reinforcements will arrive in Spain," he wrote to Lord Liverpool, November 19th, penetrating Napoleon's design. "I do not think they will succeed with an army of seventy or even eighty thousand men if they do not make their attack for two or three months, which I believe is now impossible. I conceive not only that they may, but that they will make the attack before they will subdue the north of Spain." It was to parry this foreseen onset that he created the Lines of Torres Vedras, and managed to keep his great project secret, not only from the enemy, but from his own army!

It was towards the end of his long sojourn on the Guadiana that the Spanish Junta, against his advice, once more sent forward their soldiers to defeat—Areizaga's army was routed at Ocaña and Del Parque was worsted at Alba de Tormes—and thus Andalusia was laid open to the French. Wellington held his ground as long as he deemed it prudent, but towards the end of November, when the Spanish authorities were bent on following their own course, and even trying to force him into a dependent position, he transferred his main body from the Guadiana to the Mondego, and left the trusty Hill at Abrantes to watch the Tagus valley. Then followed the invasion of Andalusia by Joseph and Soult, and the speedy capture of everything

up to the walls of Cadiz, which, saved by Albuquerque's rapid march, was now reinforced by British troops drawn from Wellington's army—troops he could ill spare, yet did spare, so ready was he to subordinate his own interests to the common cause. During the spring and summer of 1810 even his steadfast mind was most severely tried. Napoleon, bent on divorcing the faithful Josephine and obtaining a new wife from a royal house—he first asked for a Russian and next secured an Austrian Archduchess, —engrossed by the affairs of a stupendous empire which he was enlarging year by year, and involved already in an incipient quarrel with Russia, was unable to keep his word and conduct a second campaign in the Peninsula. But he poured tens of thousands of troops over the Pyrenees, urged on and lashed his marshals and generals, gave them almost absolute power within the limits of their commands, and not only made Soult military dictator in Joseph's realm, but appointed Masséna, Prince of Essling, to command the army which was to conquer Portugal. Under Napoleon's vigorous stimulus fortress after fortress fell in fighting Catalonia, and throughout Spain the French appeared to stride from victory to victory. One force, flowing from the heart of the nation, could not be repressed. The *partidas* and *guerillas*, irregular warriors under irregular chiefs, were everywhere beaten and everywhere present. Hardly one single line of communication, though strongly guarded, was safe from incursions; letters were intercepted, convoys captured, weak detachments beaten, and stragglers murdered. Nevertheless the French in masses were always and easily victorious in the field, and as the strong places yielded, sometimes

after a stout and sometimes after a feeble resistance, the Emperor's lieutenants appeared to have a grip of the country. In the midst of this tempest Wellington and the armies he commanded were the only solid forces, erect, compact, and undaunted. The commander had not only to contend with an enemy led by redoubtable captains. He had to combat and control foes in the Portuguese Regency, and sustain his own Government. He had to withstand even the officers of his army, some highly placed, who helped the opposition, bombarded their friends at home with shrieks of despair, and rendered the House of Commons reluctant to vote supplies. "The truth is," wrote Lord Liverpool in September 1810, "the contest could never have been maintained in Portugal through the winter and spring if it had not been for the determination of the Government to persevere in it at all risks to themselves, against not only the declared opinions of their opponents but the private remonstrances of many of their friends." Nevertheless the credit of tenacity is Wellington's due, for had he flinched nothing could have averted a retreat from Portugal, perhaps from the Peninsula. Nor was it a blind tenacity, but one based on a sober and correct estimate of the facts—the superb qualities of his British troops; the weakness as well as the mighty strength of the French; Spanish folly and Spanish obstinacy; the steadfast and docile spirit of the Portuguese people; the disturbed condition of home politics which helped to enfeeble the Government, not less than the natural defect which made the statesmen of all parties, and still more the parties themselves, incapable of taking profound and far-reaching views of any great military

plans. He surveyed the whole field, so vast and so complex, formed just conclusions, and stood firmly by his judgment. But it was only after he had achieved splendid, but still qualified successes, that the greatness of his character was recognised and the confidence of the British people won.

In the spring of 1810 the common cause seemed to be falling into ruin. No power in Europe, except England, was on foot against Napoleon, who was striving with all his might to exclude her from the continent and destroy her commerce. Wellington and his little army were in the north of Portugal watching the storm gathering over the frontier. For Masséna, having a wide command, had come to the front in May, intent on wresting Ciudad Rodrigo from the Spaniards in order to secure a solid base for the invasion of Portugal. He assembled more than eighty thousand men, and had under his control nearly forty thousand more; for Regnier on the Tagus and Bonnet in the Asturias were within his jurisdiction. When Ciudad was invested by Ney in June, the Spaniards and Portuguese eagerly besought Wellington to march to its relief; but an essential quality of a great commander is strength to resist temptation. He had that quality; and, although it was hard to resist, it would have been weak to yield, since even success, always doubtful against superior numbers of good troops, would not have improved his position. He was threatened from the side of Estremadura as well as Castille, had to watch narrowly the movements on all sides, maintain a sharp contest with the obstructives in the Portuguese Regency, and make up for the shortcomings of his Government as well as he could. Nothing shook his constancy of mind.

Ciudad Rodrigo surrendered early in July, yet he still held his ground. Before and during the siege the famous Light Division, commanded by Robert Craufurd, faced the French on the Agueda, and performed many actions which showed how perfect it was, and how dangerous to assail. Wellington had expressly ordered Craufurd not to fight beyond the Coa, the next deep affluent of the Douro on the plain; but Craufurd did not obey. The fall of Ciudad still found him in front of the river; and when on July 24th Ney bounded forward at the head of twenty-nine thousand men, including a host of cavalry, the Light Division leader, carried away by his pugnacity, lingered to fight him, and it was a marvel that his hardy men escaped. But they did, thanks to their own great qualities, although the sole line of retreat was over a bridge at the bottom of a deep ravine; and when by luck and judgment they had crossed, no Frenchmen, or few, followed, for the deadly musketry drew a line on the bridge which none could pass. "I am glad to see you safe, Craufurd," said the General when he met him. "Oh, I was in no danger, I assure you," replied the fighting Scot. "But I was from your conduct," said Wellington. Craufurd's sole private comment was, "He is d——d crusty to-day,"—and he had reason to be. The British lost three hundred and forty-two killed, wounded, and prisoners, but the French were fewer by a thousand men. Then Almeida, which stands beyond the Coa, was invested; a lucky shell falling in the magazine paralysed the defence, and the strong little fortress, which should have resisted for some weeks, surrendered. The two places which Masséna needed for the security of his advance were thus in his power, and

the long-deferred wrestle with the mighty French army was now to begin.

Wellington still held his positions, and kept them until the arrival of Regnier at Guarda, the gate into the line on the right, made it clear that Masséna was coming on. Then he began to retreat in accordance with his carefully prepared plan, and directed Hill and Leith, who were near Abrantes and Thomar, to join him in front of Coimbra. For he never intended to risk a battle so far from Lisbon, or fight at all, unless on formidable ground. The disposition he had made of his divisions was framed for the purpose of guarding all the practicable lines of invasion, and concentrating upon that which the adversary might select. So that when, in the middle of September, the French Marshal started forward, Wellington yielded the ground he occupied in order to secure his retreat upon the Lines. He watched his opponent closely, and was so quick that his troops were united on the Alva when the French were at Viseu; for Hill had detected the movement of Regnier, and, anticipating orders, had marched at once towards his chief. Masséna selected for his line of advance the right bank of the Mondego, said to be the worst road in Portugal, and when his masses of troops and baggage emerged from the defiles he found himself between the river and a curving range of mountains, and on the mountains the allied army barring his way to Coimbra. The two armies had moved on each bank of the river, but the Allies crossed to the right where the stream breaks through the lofty heights, and occupied the position of Busaco on the ridge which closes the deep and wooded vales. Reduced since May by disease and combat to

fifty-six thousand men, the French were wedged in between the Mondego and the Caramula Sierra, with no outlet known to them except over the crest of the ridge, where Wellington halted to fight a battle.

That serious risk did not form part of his original design. He had induced the Regency to enforce the old laws exacting service from all able-bodied Portuguese, and besides the thirty thousand regulars trained by Beresford, there were under arms in the hills, from the Minho to the capes of Algarve, from the sea to the rugged frontier, many score thousands of men, willing and eager but badly armed and ill-fed, commanded by local leaders or partisan chiefs, like Trant and John Wilson and Silveira. When the French moved southward these swarmed on their flanks and rear, easily brushed away, yet ever returning. Wellington proposed and the Regency agreed to act on the stern, harsh, yet effective plan of wasting the whole country between the Estrella and the sea, and transporting the people who could not hide in the mountains into the Lines; so that Masséna, deprived of all sources of supply, and having no magazines, because he acted on Napoleon's maxim that war should support war, would be forced to retreat when he was stopped before the fortified positions covering Lisbon. It was therefore not necessary to fight, and if the British General chose to do so, though he afterwards thought it a mistake, he did so deliberately and because, at the time, he thought a battle would raise the confidence and gratify the yearnings of his troops, and give a certain splendour to his retreat. He could trust his greatly outnumbered British troops in a strong defensive position, and, not doubting their good-will, he

could test the worth of Beresford's Portuguese in actual combat. It was a risk, because Leith and Hill were near, but not on the field, when the leading columns of the French appeared; but when he thought it right to run a risk, he was never the man to shirk the responsibility. And considering that the French armies had been so triumphant in Spain, it was just as well to remind them again, before getting beyond their reach behind works, that they were not invincible.

Perhaps the risk was greater than he judged it to be, for when Ney and Regnier came in sight of the position the allies were not in array, and Ney desired to begin a battle at once. But Masséna was some miles distant, Ney dared not fight without leave; and before the French commander joined the Marshal the opportunity, if any such really existed, had passed away. As they were closing on the Sierra, Wellington was obliged to take command of the Light Division, in order to prevent Craufurd from plunging into action. Always burning to fight, he had waited so long that "all the skill of the General," says Napier, "and the readiness of the troops could scarcely evade a disaster." Luckily, the General was ubiquitous, which means that he saw where the pinch was likely to be. He was usually foremost in an advance, and with the hindmost in a retreat. When Masséna on the afternoon of the 26th reconnoitred the position, he found it well occupied, yet he resolved to fight on the following day.

The position of Busaco was a mountain crest eight miles long, extending from the Mondego on the right to the impassable ridges of the Caramula Sierra on the left. The highest ground was in the centre, and there stood

Spencer with the First Division. On his right were Picton, Leith, and Hill; forward, yet below him, was Pack; and on his left front, upon a lower bastion-like rocky spur, was the Light Division and a German brigade; while Cole held the extreme left, abutting on the pathless Caramula. Three roads coming from Martagoa cut through the position, each running on to Coimbra, one passing a large convent in rear of the left centre; and a road also ran along the crest behind the front of battle. The French troops were on the opposing ridges, separated from Busaco "by a chasm so profound that the naked eye could hardly distinguish the movement of troops in the bottom, yet in parts so narrow that twelve-pounders could range across." Masséna feared lest the British General should not wait the shock; the British General was confident of success if he were assailed. For Masséna need not have fought, he might have turned the line before him; but while Wellington knew of the rough narrow track from Martagoa through the Caramula to Boyalva, and hoped that it was guarded by Trant, who could not have resisted but only delayed an army, the French Marshal was ignorant of the road, and even had its existence been reported to him, he would probably still have preferred a battle to a manœuvre. Thus at dawn on September 27th Regnier and Ney sent forward columns of attack; Junot the Marshal held in reserve; and the Battle of Busaco began. The French made two determined onsets, widely separated and not simultaneous. Regnier's brigades, directed against the right, climbed the slopes with unflagging strides, and were first in action. Driving in Picton's skirmishers and their

supports, they won the crest; and while one portion turned to the right, the other formed across the ridge facing the Mondego. Wellington himself brought up two guns, which opened on the flank of the former intruders with grape, while musketry struck their front; finally a resolute charge by the Eighty-eighth and half the Forty-fifth swept them from the height and down the steep up which they had valiantly ascended. The other part of the column did not long retain its vantage ground. General Leith, who saw their progress up the hill, hastened forward with one brigade, and the Ninth, under Colonel Cameron, running in without firing a shot, turned them out of the position, but did not pursue except with musketry, and Hill coming up as well as Leith's second brigade, the struggle was over, for Regnier was unable to resume the battle. On the other flank Ney fared no better. His hardy soldiers also overcame the obstacles in their path until they had nearly gained the summit, but then the line once more mastered the column. Craufurd, alone on a rock, waited until the French were close below the crest, following the retiring riflemen, and at the right moment he sent the Forty-third and Fifty-second into the fray. Their fury could not be resisted, for their charge broke the head of the column; their fire struck both front and flanks, and "three terrible discharges at five yards' distance shattered the wavering mass." Here again discipline prevailed, and the pursuit was stayed. These two severe combats virtually ended the battle, for afterwards no serious attack was made. The position had been assailed and found impregnable. The killed and wounded on the side of the Allies is put down at thirteen hundred men; while the French lost

one general and eight hundred men killed, and three generals wounded, their total loss being estimated at four thousand five hundred. It was a rude lesson.

During the afternoon, for the battle ceased soon after midday, Masséna took council, and learning accidentally that a rough road over the Caramula would enable him to turn the position, he resolved to take it at once. The next day, covered by skirmishing in the ravines, the French army disappeared from the front and were seen traversing the mountains on the left. Napier gives us a glimpse of his commander on the evening of the 28th. From the ground occupied by the Light Division he "looked at the distant columns with great earnestness: he seemed uneasy, his countenance bore a fierce, angry expression; and suddenly mounting his horse, he rode away without speaking. One hour afterwards the whole army was in movement," heading by different routes for the Lines. The "fierce, angry, expression" may be referred to the failure of Trant, for which he was not to blame, to obstruct the narrow path to Boyalva.

The army retired by easy marches towards Lisbon, and as Masséna fondly hoped to embark in their ships and leave him master; but when he approached the mountains the British army had vanished through the passes, and the French Marshal stood baffled and astonished before the formidable works of an entrenched camp which snatched from his grasp the fruits of the campaign. It was a surprise, not only to the Prince of Essling, but to the Portuguese and the British army; and it may be said that the stupendous design realised in the secret and assiduous construction of the Lines of Torres Vedras revealed for the first time, to his own country-

men as well as to Europe, the military genius of England's great captain.

Masséna marched his troops boldly up to the verge of the fortified hills. He had declared that the position of Busaco was the strongest in Portugal; here he found a stronger, and, after a close examination of all he could see, he refrained from attack. But the line visible to him was only one of a series. Wellington and the engineer, Colonel Fletcher, had converted the heights flanked by the Tagus and the Atlantic into a fortress, and the General had formed his design and the Colonel had begun the work in October, 1809, to meet the exigency which arose in October, 1810. It was the corner-stone of the system whereby he undertook to defend Portugal, when he asked first for thirty, and then for thirty-five thousand British troops, the greatest number he could feed. There were three lines. The foremost extended from Alhandra on the Tagus to the mouth of the Zizandre on the sea. That, though powerful, was not absolutely impervious to attack at the outset, but became so when the rains filled the streams and flooded the banks of the Zizandre. The second, which touched the meadows of the Tagus south of the Calandrix and the ocean at the mouth of the St. Lourença, was the real defence; and behind these two was a third on the estuary below Lisbon, drawn around the castle of St. Julian, garrisoned by Marines, and thrown up as cover for an embarkation. So that all emergencies, even the worst, were provided for; but Wellington never believed that the French would be able to drive him to his ships, and only feared lest the British Government should recall his army. The whole

stupendous array, which barred all the roads through the mountains, was well armed and amply manned by a victorious army, while every day the mighty strength of the original works was increased by the energy and invention of the defenders. Masséna judged rightly when he stood aloof and took post between Villa Franca and Sobral, until dire necessity obliged him to retire upon Santarem, and also to permit his veterans to spread themselves abroad in search of food and thus ruin their fine discipline. The Marshal held on to the Tagus and the Zezere, partly because he got some provand from that unwasted country, and also because he still hoped that Soult or Mortier from the south would join him. Wellington had called Romana and six thousand Spaniards into the Lines. They crossed the Tagus at Aldea Gallega opposite Lisbon, and Napoleon declared that Soult ought to have followed them, as if that would have been practicable in itself or in the conditions governing the proceedings of Soult. But Napoleon was not well informed, and he had got into the habit of demanding too much from his generals. The truth is that in the winter of 1810-11, while Masséna was cut off from communication even with his magazines, Soult could neither take Cadiz nor detach sufficient troops from Andalusia to relieve the Army of Portugal. Coimbra, with a host of wounded, had been captured by Trant almost before the French were on the Tagus, and Silveira, taking post in the mountains, had turned back Gardanne with supplies from Ciudad Rodrigo.

Wellington, secure behind his rocks and redoubts, ready to spring forward so soon as his foe retreated, was still in danger from his friends and allies. Certain

members of the Regency opposed and harassed him until he could only free himself by threatening to withdraw, and, when that did not avail, changing the governing body in self-defence. It was the arrogant faction which had failed to devastate the country, thus leaving resources within reach of the French, and it was the same men who starved their own people and soldiers and strove to inflame the populace of Lisbon against their defenders. In addition to the folly of the Portuguese he had to wrestle with the political weakness of his own Government, growing out of causes which seemed inherent in the British system. Even in January, 1811, he wrote to Mr. William Pole that the only instructions he had were "to save the British army, and that is the only object," he said, "officially stated to me for keeping an army in the Peninsula." But privately the object was plainly declared. He had, he said, scarcely the force, thirty-five thousand infantry, originally promised; he wanted more troops and more money; and he remarks that "if we cannot persevere in carrying it [the contest] on in the Peninsula, or elsewhere on the continent, we must prepare to make one of our own islands the seat of war." If he were largely reinforced, he was tolerably certain of the result; and, he added, "I am equally certain that if Bonaparte cannot root us out of this country, he must alter his system in Europe, and give us such a peace as we ought to accept." At the same time he doubted whether the administration had the power, inclination, or nerve to do what should be done. They allowed him no patronage or power, such as a commander always had; and though he was "the mainspring of all other operations," yet they gave him neither influence, nor

support, nor means of acquiring influence. "I have not authority to give a shilling, or a stand of arms, or a round of ammunition to anybody. I do give all, it is true, but it is contrary to my instructions and at my peril." Not another officer in the army would "even look at" the risks he incurred every day; but if he did not incur them the contest could not go on for a moment. These warm words paint the situation in strong colours, and they show that Wellington was the soul of the war in the Peninsula. Reinforcements were on the way, and also notes of discouragement still went out from his officers and came from London; yet he remained firm and constant, and literally saved the Government and the country he served by his strength of mind and unswerving fidelity. Such was his duty as a servant of the State, and his duty he always performed. At that very moment the Spaniards on the Guadiana, neglecting to destroy or defend the bridge at Merida, had allowed the French to threaten the Alentejo, that is the approach to the left bank of the Tagus opposite Lisbon, and had thus increased the necessity of guarding the headlands on the harbour. Soult, indeed, was now seriously bent on capturing Olivenca, Badajos, and Elvas, before co-operating with Masséna. He took the first, but ere Badajos surrendered on March 11th Masséna had been four days on the road to northern Spain; and as Graham defeated Victor at Barossa on the 5th, Soult gained nothing except Badajos, which was much, for he was obliged to hurry back to guard Andalusia.

The enemy had lingered long in the valley of the Tagus, and had offered no opening for attack. "Masséna is an old fox," Wellington writes from Cartaxo, after the

retreat of the French to Santarem, "he risks nothing." So it was; but at length, when no news came from Soult, and no reinforcements except a few thousands under Drouet, who did not pass Leiria and failed to open the line of communication, when disease and want had reduced his army to some fifty thousand men, the old Marshal resolved to retreat. He began his stealthy movement on the second day of March, with the baggage and Ney's corps, but Junot and Regnier did not slip away until the evening of the 5th, and the whole movement was so cleverly managed that Wellington was not able to follow in force until the 7th. But the Light Division was off in pursuit early on the 6th, and soon the whole army was on the track of the French. From that time it was a race for positions and lines of retreat, but although Masséna desired to seize Coimbra and secure the high road to Oporto and the line of the Douro, his object was frustrated, partly by the failures of his subordinates and greatly by the vigour of the pursuit. Regnier had retreated by the road from Thomar to Espinhal, while Ney and Junot took the mountain paths towards Pombal. The former was followed by one brigade and some horse, the latter by the main army; Leith and Picton advancing from the Lines by Leiria along the road to Coimbra, the others over the hills from Santarem and Thomar. Masséna halted his two corps at Pombal, still uncertain whether Trant could be frightened out of Coimbra, and on the 10th the Allies were up in his front. An attempt at resistance was speedily overcome, and the French fell back towards Condeixa. Ney, however, hard pressed, stopped to fight or gain time at Redhinha on a plain

commanding the hollow through which ran the high road, flanked by a pine wood and the Sierra. Wellington, who was early on the ground, reconnoitred the position, but Ney had made so fine a display that his force seemed larger than it was. Therefore Wellington sent the Light Division on one flank and Picton on the other, and drew up his main body against the centre. A contemporary letter from a gallant gunner engaged in the fight says: "Figure to yourself fourteen thousand men with their colours unfurled advancing in line, and supported by solid columns of infantry and cavalry on their flanks, and a second line in rear of the centre; indeed, it was such a sight that all former military spectacles must give way to." Still, for once Wellington had been imposed on, for according to Napier there were already on the ground enough troops to overwhelm Ney; and when the "gorgeous lines" started forward, the enemy had vanished over the river Soure, and could only be struck by the artillery. That was to the credit of Ney as a master of tactics, but he ran a great risk and was taught a useful lesson. From Redhinha the pursuit followed fast through Condeixa. Masséna, it is true, halted again behind that town, yet only to cover his line of retreat and outface his adversary. Wellington then assumed a masterful initiative, and turned the French left with the Third Division; whereupon Ney burned Condeixa, and the enemy retreated in some confusion towards Marcella, where a bridge spanned the Alva just above its confluence with the Mondego, the sole road open. Ney, who had all the fighting, stood fast at Casal Navel until, being assailed in front and turned on his left, he was forced to give ground; and

the left bank of the Ceira being the higher, he thought it desirable to hold it, and with some six thousand men faced his pursuers at Foz D'Aronce, with a river in his rear. There he waited too long, for Wellington, knowing his audacious temper, closed with him at once, inflicted great losses on one wing of his gallant troops, and obliged him to cross the Ceira in the night. This was on the 15th, a week since the pursuit began, during which time Masséna, allowed no rest, had been driven from every position, thrust aside from Coimbra, and compelled to take the road to Ciudad Rodrigo; and he would have suffered still more severely had not Wellington's plans been frustrated by the heedlessness of some of his subordinates. The French corps were now again united, for Regnier had come up, and the British brigade which had followed him also joined the main body. Masséna having broken the bridges made one more attempt to stand behind the Alva, and seemed confident in his position. Yet he was speedily shaken and again in retreat when he saw the British soldiers traversing the rugged heights on his left, and less than three weeks after he began his clever movements from Santarem, he was in Celorico, the point from which he launched his invading columns down the Mondego in September, 1810. He now wished to transfer his army through Guarda to Coria on the Alagon, and threaten Lisbon from the side of the Tagus. Ney openly disobeyed his orders; the Marshal thereupon sent him back to France, gave the Sixth Corps to Loison, and moved to Guarda where he joined Regnier. He hoped to remain there, but Wellington, whose reinforcements had arrived at the front, and filled up the gap made by the march of

Cole's division to join Beresford on the left bank of the Tagus, closed upon Guarda, and on the 29th tumbled the French out of that strong position, compelling them to retreat beyond the Coa and occupy Sabugal. Masséna still clung to the idea of conquering Portugal, and continued his duel with Wellington to the last. Fortune did not smile on him, and on April 3rd Wellington enveloped and defeated Regnier who held Sabugal; and the next day the whole invading army crossed the frontier into Spain. This last engagement, which brought out once more the fine qualities of the Light Division, was marred of its full effect by accidents, but the principal events in that astonishing fight will always shed a glory on the names of Sydney Beckwith, Captain John Hopkins, and the officers and men of the Light Division and their comrades, Elder's Portuguese Caçadores, whose skill, valour, and tenacity received the high reward of Wellington's public and unqualified praise. Four days afterwards Masséna, leaving a division at Ciudad Rodrigo, retired upon Salamanca, having lost every battle and combat and thirty thousand men in the campaign. Wellington then invested Almeida and took up once more the line of the Agueda over against the great frontier fortress. Well might Lord Liverpool, while publicly expressing the pride and pleasure of his Government, say in a private letter to Wellington, "The retreat of the French certainly forms a new era in the war." "The event," he added, "has fully confirmed all your predictions," adding that the Government was "determined not to be diverted from the Peninsula to other objects." His "difficulties as to finance and specie were great," but instead of recalling

troops, a regiment of horse which he asked for was sent out, and the Government, which a few weeks earlier had refused to allow him to accept the command of the Spanish armies, now recovered sufficient courage to ask for the great commander's opinion respecting what could be done in the interior of Spain. The letters, dated April 11th, mark the period of change from apprehension to confidence.

That was something gained; yet Wellington's position was still most embarrassing, because the Portuguese authorities were neglectful, if not treacherous, and because the French had made such progress in Estremadura, capturing Olivença, Badajos, and Campo Mayor. When it was certain that Masséna must retire, Beresford was reinforced and sent towards the Guadiana with two divisions to oust Mortier and recover the fortresses. By rapid marches he did succeed in snatching back first Campo Mayor and then Olivença, but was not equally happy in dealing with Badajos, although the breaches were still open. At the beginning of April Wellington started from the front on the Agueda to try what he could do in the south, leaving Sir Brent Spencer in command. He was near Badajos in Beresford's camp on April 21st, and did what was possible, which was not much, to rally the Spaniards and remedy errors; and in the midst of his exertions came the startling and unexpected intelligence that Masséna was once more near Ciudad Rodrigo, and bent on raising the blockade of Almeida. Wellington instantly hurried to his northern army, moving with such expedition that he rejoined it on April 28th. "It was lucky," he writes, "that I came when I did." Masséna had obtained the reluc-

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examined the position, and the armies were quiet. On the 5th the tempest broke. One corps skirmished on the left of the British line, and Fuentes was again the scene of a fiercer encounter, which raged in the village street and about the chapel on the summit. But the main attack was made upon the right, where the divisions of the French Sixth Corps, supported by the whole of their numerous cavalry, except the horsemen of the Imperial Guard, crossed the Duas Casas and burst through the wood into the plain. Julian Sanchez was driven or retired over the Turones; the British cavalry, outnumbered, remained to support the infantry, which was also obliged to fall back, and Norman Ramsay saved his battery by charging right through the French horse. At the earliest indication of the formidable onset Wellington had sent forward the Light Division to sustain the Seventh, and both were thrown into squares, yet not before some men of the latter were slain, though no square was broken. Then the Light Division, once more under Craufurd, covered the retreat of the Seventh over the Turones, and, always attended by the faithful British horse, withdrew majestically in their compact formation back towards the heights, defying the swarms of French cavalry who "danced" about them yet dared not charge. It is admitted that the moment was one full of peril, and the French contend that had Loison pushed on with a will they must have won. They also say that he dared not take upon himself to act without orders, and that "the four divisions and all the cavalry, by an inconceivable fatality, suddenly stopped short just as they should have gathered the fruit of victory." Perhaps the stout bearing and steady movement of the

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the terrible battle of Albuera had been fought and won by a grand display of disciplined courage; yet so hard was the task, that at the end "eighteen hundred unwounded men, the remnant of six thousand unconquerable British soldiers, stood triumphant on the fatal hill." When Wellington arrived, Soult had drawn back to Llerena in the mountains, where in the middle of June he was joined by Drouet. From that post he watched the siege of Badajos, Wellington's first serious attempt to recover the fortress, not according to the rules of art, for he had not the means, but by rougher measures, since he had to win or lose in a given time with the few and imperfect resources at his command. Brialmont, a competent judge, condemns all Wellington's sieges "from an artistic point of view," but he cannot help admiring them "as examples of what courage and perseverance can effect, when opposed by adverse fortune and the vices of a backward military organisation." In this first effort to take Badajos he failed. Napoleon had ordered Marmont to join Soult, and as the former went south from Salamanca Spencer quitting Beira took the same direction, and each arrived on the scene about the same time. Wellington, therefore, raised the siege, and occupied a position behind the Caya, for the two Marshals had sixty-four thousand men, and his force barely exceeded two-thirds of that number. For some reason they did not attack, perhaps because "ces vieux guerriers, toujours vainquers dans le Nord et si souvent en Espagne, n'abordèrent plus les Anglais qu'avec une certaine défiance." Or, as Napier puts it, "Marmont's army was conscious of recent defeats at Busaco, Sabugal, and Fuentes d'Onoro; the horrid field of Albuera was

fresh, the fierce blood there spilled still reeked in the nostrils of Soult's soldiers;" and thus the bold bearing of Wellington, assumed at great risk to impose on the enemy, had an ally in the chastened temper of his once confident foes.

The sum and substance of this great effort of concentration by the French was the relief of Badajos. The two Marshals, who would not risk a battle, soon separated again, because, Wellington having induced Blake to enter Andalusia and having set other Spanish Generals in motion, Soult was obliged to hurry to the rescue of Seville and Grenada, and Marmont did not feel strong enough to stand alone. King Joseph also added to the trouble by going suddenly to Paris, declaring he would abdicate. Napoleon made concessions to pacify him, gave him more money and sent more troops, including part of the Imperial Guard, through the Pyrenees; yet although he publicly admitted that the combat with England would be fought thenceforth in Spain, and still spoke of going thither himself, he was at that instant considering a descent on Ireland, forming schemes for the invasion of England from Antwerp, Boulogne, and Cherbourg, and preparing on all sides for the rapidly approaching war with Russia, which Wellington scented in the wind. At this moment, when his position was full of peril, when the French had not only captured the eastern fortresses, but, what concerned him more nearly, held Badajos and Ciudad Rodrigo, leaving Elvas alone as a support in the south and nothing in the north; when Spanish resistance was at its lowest ebb, and almost confined to the irrepressible *guerillas;* when the Portuguese native authorities

were all but openly hostile and quite openly obstructive, the steadfast Captain kept a constant mind. He had hours of doubt and righteous wrath when the mighty burden pressed upon him, and he talked of retiring from the turmoil; but that supreme sense of duty, his greatest quality, soon prevailed; and as he manfully confronted, so he overcame his thronging troubles.

From the pestilential Guadiana the war shifted once more towards the north, and after a series of adroit manœuvres Wellington and Marmont were on the frontiers of Castille. The English General cherished the design of wresting Ciudad Rodrigo from his foe, and in August he caused a battering-train, sent from England, to be landed at Oporto secretly, and dragged over the mountains to the valley of the Agueda. At one moment it seemed possible that the fortress might be blockaded and surprised when scantily supplied with food, but that moment passed, the French being too quick and the convoys too well guarded. Yet Wellington remained close by watching for a chance, and Marmont was equally on the alert to frustrate his adversary. He had great means, for he could call up large forces, and was daring as well as capable. In point of numbers the opponents were not fairly matched, as Wellington could only dispose of some forty-four thousand men. While vigilant on the Agueda, Wellington, always provident, repaired the famous Lines on both banks of the Tagus, and vainly endeavoured to make the Regency improve the roads and bridges in his rear, moved thereto by the menaced advent of Napoleon. In September Marmont, called on to throw fresh stores into Ciudad, collected sixty thousand men at Tamanes on the 21st, and not only

poured abundant supplies into the fortress, but dashed in among the British divisions, which were widely separated, yet not so posted that they could not unite if time were gained. It was gained, for Wellington with a weak force daringly resisted an attack by a mass of cavalry at El Bodon, and when the Seventy-seventh and Fifth Regiments were obliged to retreat, they did so in one square, defying and punishing the swarming horsemen, and falling back slowly towards Guinaldo, after being joined by other regiments of the Third Division. At Guinaldo, a few redoubts formed a sort of entrenched post, and in the afternoon it was occupied by about fourteen thousand men. Later came in two regiments which had been thrust off the direct route, and the Light Division was still absent. After devious wanderings, apparently caused by Craufurd's preference for his own line of retreat, and when Marmont had assembled an immense force on the British front, the Light Division arrived, fatigued but entire. Wellington then drew in all his divisions and concentrated them upon a position behind the stream of Villa Mayor. The French Marshal attacked the outposts at Aldea Ponte, but pushed his advantages no further, and let slip the fairest chance he ever had of beating Wellington. The latter retired to even a stronger position in a loop of the Coa, and was not molested or followed. Nothing beyond brilliant combats resulted from these formidable-looking French operations, and it is easy to see that Wellington owed his safety to his coolness in danger, the intrepidity of his troops, and to the moral ascendency which he had established over the minds of his adversaries by his uniform success in baffling their manœuvres and defeating their armies.

The French returned to their old quarters at Salamanca and in the valley of the Tagus; the British troops were quiet for months, distributed in cantonments over a wide area; and Wellington, busy as he always was, found time occasionally to hunt with Lord Tweeddale's imported pack of foxhounds, giving out, to mislead the French, that he would have two packs next year.

During this period of inaction the main design cherished by the Commander-in-Chief was the recovery of Ciudad Rodrigo. To that object he bent all his energies, and kept his secret so well that none guessed it down to the moment of execution. He brought up the battering-train to Almeida, which revealed nothing, as the guns were apparently obtained to arm the fortress; he kept his divisions spread out for the sake of subsistence, and that looked like weakness; he constructed a bridge to be used on the Agueda, and accumulated other means, but the purpose was never conjectured. The boldness of the project was favourable to success, since the French did not think that in the depth of winter he would venture on any large and hazardous enterprise. So, keeping his own counsel, he prepared and watched for a fitting opportunity. It came at the end of the year. Napoleon, drawing away the Imperial Guard and all the Poles, rearranged his armies in Spain in December, giving, as he said, forty-two in lieu of the thirty-six battalions which he abstracted, but the quantity did not make up for the quality, and he took no account of the horse. Moreover, he wanted Marmont not only to counteract Wellington but also to reinforce Suchet, and he seemed to draw a line between the operations of Marmont and Soult, tending to deepen the existing jealousies which the feeble

Joseph was not competent to soothe or dispel. Wellington, taking advantage of the transition or confusion, reaped the fruit of his own astute line of conduct which had bewildered one Marshal, and Hill's intelligent energy which had upset the calculations of another. When least expected he swooped down upon Ciudad Rodrigo, and was master of its defences before Marmont could collect an army of relief.

Success depended on rapidity, and rapidity meant a great loss of life; but in no other way could the place be captured under the conditions, and the sacrifice brought more solid gain than if it had occurred in battle. With all his propelling power, Wellington could not begin the siege until January 8th, 1812, when, by a daring stroke, Colberne stormed the exterior redoubt on a hill called the Great Teson, and established the first parallel. The working parties were hindered by the severe weather and the want of transport, as well as by the enemy's fire; but by the 13th twenty-eight guns were in the batteries, and on the afternoon of the 14th they opened fire at long range. In order to anticipate the coming of a relieving army, it was resolved to effect a breach or breaches and storm in at once without blowing in the counterscarp. The operation was aided by the capture of two convents outside the body of the place, and the approaches were pushed forward to the Lesser Teson. Despite a destructive defence, ten days after the first shot was fired the breaches were declared to be practicable, and the next day the storming columns were in action. The principal resistance was at the great breach where the conflict was deadly; but through the lesser breach the Light Division regiments forced an entrance, and thus turned the

position of the defenders, so that the Third Division also broke in. On all sides the storming parties were victorious, the town filled rapidly with soldiers, and the Governor, retreating to the castle with a great part of the garrison, soon surrendered. It was a brilliant example of resolute valour, but the price of victory was great. The Allies lost twelve hundred men and ninety officers killed and wounded, one half in the breaches; the list including Craufurd and Mackinnon who were slain, and Vandeleur and Colborne who were wounded. The fruits of that day were fifteen hundred prisoners, large stores of ammunition and one hundred and fifty guns, among which was Marmont's battering-train; but the greatest prize was the fortress itself, which, constituting a barrier to the invasion of Portugal, opened a road into Spain. The British made their triumphant General an Earl; the Spaniards, Duke of Ciudad Rodrigo; and the Portuguese, Marquis of Torres Vedras. The capture of Ciudad marked a new stage of the war.

One measure of his merit is the consternation of his adversaries. Marmont, who only heard of the siege on the 15th, assembled forty-five thousand men at Salamanca on January 25th, nearly a week after the fortress had succumbed, when learning the fact, he withdrew to Valladolid. It was not until the 27th that Napoleon got news of an English movement on Ciudad Rodrigo, which he thought was undertaken as a diversion to aid Valencia, then besieged by Suchet, and he instantly authorised a temporary detention of the Imperial Guard as a support for Marmont. Learning that Ciudad had fallen he insisted that the Marshal, if he could not retake it, should occupy Salamanca and make an incursion into

Portugal in order to detain Wellington in Beira. A little later (February 18th) he reiterated his orders at great length, directing Marmont to keep his troops together, so that if Wellington committed the great "fault" of moving on Badajos, the Marshal from Salamanca might bring him swiftly back by moving on Almeida. Before that advice reached Marmont Wellington had committed the fault, and his northern opponent was not in a position to do anything that would arrest or punish his audacious enterprise—audacious, yet based on a cool estimate of the facts, and no heedless spring upon a tempting prey.

It is a remarkable fact that the preparations for the recapture of Badajos were in progress before the siege of Ciudad was begun. Success in the latter case depended more on the disposition of the hostile armies, in the former on climatic considerations; in both, to a great extent, on the French belief that Wellington was a timid general who would not incur great risks. Yet had they studied his career they would have known that few surpassed him in boldness, still fewer in far-reaching plans, and none then living in accomplishing much with small means. He took Ciudad in the depth of winter; he fell upon Badajos in the spring, because he relied on the annual rains to fill the torrents and the streams which crossed the great road into Portugal, on the Portuguese militia and irregular troops to obstruct the passes, and most on his superior quickness and the valour of his troops, who trusted him as he trusted them. In addition, the Spanish bands and regulars were set in motion to harass Soult, and were lying in wait to dash on Seville and Grenada if he moved upon the Guadiana. Therefore he transferred his army from Beira early in March,

and on the 16th began his hard task, all the harder because Philippon, the Governor of Badajos, was an able warrior and his ample garrison brave men. Covering the siege operations with an army in the field under Hill and Graham, he employed, at first, the Third, Fourth, and Light Divisions, not much more than three times the strength of the garrison, and later the Fifth, to win this great fortress. And he won it in twenty-one days. "The soldiers swear we shall succeed," he wrote on the 20th, "because we invested on St. Patrick's eve and broke ground on St. Patrick's day." And next to the inflexible resolution of the General, it was the officers and soldiers who mastered Badajos. For defective resources and imperative political reasons again set aside the rules of art, few of which could be obeyed. By sustained efforts three breaches were made; yet the approaches were so difficult that neither could be attacked by compact formations nor stormed, even by the fiery intrepid men who on the night of April 6th sacrificed themselves in hundreds rather than recede. They struggled for hours against the terrible obstacles, and just when the awful slaughter, with no result, made Wellington order the recall of these obstinate heroes, he learned that Picton's division had carried the castle by escalade, itself an enterprise of splendid daring, that the Fifth Division had mastered the bastion of St. Vincent, and that the stronghold was practically his own. Then the other troops poured in and Philippon, driven for refuge to San Christoval, surrendered with all his men. The siege had cost the assailants more than five thousand killed and wounded, the greater moiety during the conflict on that terrible night; and none who know how

tender was the heart of the Great Captain will be astonished to learn that the dread total moved him to a passion of tears. Pity it is that the victorious soldiers stained their fame by committing outrages hardly yet forgotten; that they heeded not his orders, and that they turned their bayonets on the General himself when he sought to restore discipline.

The capture of Badajos, following so close on that of Ciudad Rodrigo, was a great blow to the French. The mere wind of the siege brought Soult through the mountains, but when he heard that the place had fallen and that the Spanish Generals were moving on Seville, he hurried back to Andalusia. Wellington had designed a mighty stroke in that quarter which could not be delivered, because Marmont took the field at the end of March, threatened Ciudad and crossed the Coa, finally turning upon Sabugal and Castillo Branco. Wellington, therefore, passing the Tagus, obliged the French to retreat without effecting more than the partial dispersion of the Portuguese militia, and in April, 1812, the adversaries faced each other on the old ground. The Spaniards having neglected to repair and provision Ciudad, the army was obliged to bring up the stores and remedy the defects. If the two Marshals had not worked in harmony during this vigorous campaign, the failure was partially due to the profound and well-meant counsels of Napoleon. For Marmont could not act on his own judgment in defiance of orders for which he waited, and when they arrived it was too late; while Soult was vexed because the aid he looked for from his colleague did not come. Wellington ably profited by these errors, increasing their effects by the impulse which he imparted to the Spanish

bands from Ferrol to Alicant. For all the operations were interdependent, and remote successes as well as defeats told on the fortunes of the Anglo-Portuguese army, which was always the mainstay of the great contest.

CHAPTER VIII

WELLINGTON'S OFFENSIVE CAMPAIGNS

THE time was now near when it would be possible and profitable to assume the offensive, and strike directly at the French in Leon and Castille. Portugal had been secured by the craft and daring which wrested the two frontier fortresses from the enemy. The next thing was to break the direct line of communication between Seville and Madrid, and that was accomplished when Hill, the best of all his lieutenants, victoriously surprised the French at Almaraz, broke the bridge, destroyed the works on the right bank, and blockaded the fort on the Mirabete on the left, which an irresolute officer failed to seize. The French having been deprived of Almaraz, by Wellington's direction the Engineer Sturgeon repaired the bridge at Alcantara, and thus a shorter line of communication was established between the British forces on the Agueda and those in Estremadura. At the same time the navigation of the Douro and the Tagus was improved to facilitate the transport of supplies, and finding that both Marshals expected to be attacked, Wellington did all he could to confirm each in his opinion. The consequence was that no plan of concerted operations against him could be formed, and from his own sources of intelligence and their intercepted letters he was

acquainted with the dissensions raging in the hostile camps. King Joseph, who had been made Commander-in-Chief, was unable to exact obedience from his captains; and thus the British General, who was bent on an offensive movement, enjoyed the advantage which it confers on one acting against perplexed and jealous adversaries. By patience and sound judgment at all times, by a wise audacity at the right moment, he had obtained a military as well as a moral ascendency, and was about to reap the harvest which his long-suffering, his ceaseless labours, and his genius as a soldier and statesman, had sown and nurtured in an ungrateful soil.

When Napoleon, on June 13th, at the head of the Grand Army was advancing on the Niemen, the little Anglo-Portuguese host, so long held at bay, sprang joyfully over the Agueda and marched towards Salamanca. Four days afterwards they were over the fords of the Tormes, and, while one division invested the fortified convents, Wellington faced Marmont from the heights of San Christoval. The French Marshal advanced to relieve the forts which were now enduring a siege, and he had a fair chance, for the means, as usual, were insufficient, although on this occasion the error in judgment was caused by the imperfect report of spies. Hence the guns were too few or unsuitable, the bright moon hindered the working parties, and the engineers were still engaged in their task when Marmont hastened over the plain with twenty-five thousand men. Then, while the forts were battered, day after day the two main armies manœuvred and wrestled on the hills and on both sides of the Tormes. Neither would take the initiative in a battle, Marmont because he could

not get a chance which suited him, Wellington because he would not risk the success of his large plans, even when his rival furnished an opportunity. At one moment the siege operations were stayed for want of ammunition, and it was not until June 27th, ten days after the investment, that the garrison was compelled to surrender. For some reason, either weakness in cavalry or the knowledge that reinforcements from the north and centre would not arrive, Marmont, after the fall of the forts, retreated over the Douro. The mere incursion of Wellington had shaken the French defensive system, for Bonnet's fine division was drawn from the Asturias, which enabled the Galician troops to invest Astorga, and the partisans on the coast, aided by Admiral Popham's squadron, as far east as Bilboa to resume their activity. The French held Toro, Tordesillas, and Tudela on the river; and Wellington, following, took post on the left bank, for his advance was arrested by the strength of the position, and his usual difficulties growing out of want of money were almost fatal. Bonnet there joined Marmont, and the latter thought that the time had come to retort upon his adversary. He resolved to cross the Douro, and his plans were so cleverly laid and neatly executed that he succeeded in gaining an initial advantage. For he marched two whole divisions to the left bank at Toro, and when attention had been drawn thither, he rapidly marched them back, and flung his whole army over the stream at Tordesillas. Wellington was not wholly surprised, but he was in peril. To meet an attack from Toro, he had collected his left and centre on the Guarena, but the right was still on the Trabancos under Sir Stapleton Cotton, and on July 18th was in the

presence of the French army. He held his ground and imposed on the adversary for a few hours, but some French horse dashing over the stream, and nearly capturing both Wellington and Beresford, found that only a part of the army was in line. Thereupon Marmont, who was bold enough and apt in invention, sent his masses onwards towards the Guarena, bent on turning the British right, and the two armies marched for ten miles on an open plain in parallel lines. The French Marshal hoped to reach the commanding table-land at Vallesa, but he was forestalled by his alert antagonist and lost some men and a general in a combat near Castrillon. After a day's halt, the game of manœuvres was resumed by Marmont, who, moving swiftly up the Guarena, crossed it near its sources and fairly turned the right of the Allied position at Vallesa; and then the two armies once more marched side by side, racing to gain positions near Salamanca. The French had the better, for although Wellington secured the hills in front of San Christoval, Marmont planted his troops on the heights above the Tormes which commanded the ford at Huerta, which gave him an access to the country on the left bank.

So far the Marshal had won the advantage in manœuvring. In other respects the armies were fairly matched. The slight superiority in number was on the side of the Allies, who also had more cavalry, but the French were nearly as many, and they had more guns. Whether there would be a battle now depended upon Marmont, for Wellington would not fight unless his rival gave him a fair occasion. The Allies fell back to San Christoval, and on the 21st, when Marmont, crossing the Tormes, took up a position at

Calvarizza de Ariba, Wellington, leaving the Third Division to watch a French division established at Babila Fuente, also planted his army on the same side of the river. He was still, while watching for a chance to fight, meditating a retreat when the enemy on the 22nd furnished an occasion. The Allies were posted on a line at right angles to the Tormes, and the French gathering over against them began the fray by a contest for the commanding hills, among which were the famous Arapiles, two isolated craggy heights near the British right. In the first rush the French gained the outer and the British the inner hill, from which at first the leading companies were driven, but quickly recovering half-way down, and enraged at their mishap, they dashed forward and secured the summit. It was from this elevation that Wellington watched the movements of his opponent, who was opposite the British left. The French divisions coming out of the forest were seen to extend more and more to their own left, and the English line was changed until it was parallel to the Tormes. As there was no longer any need to guard the other bank, the Third Division was brought over and posted on the right in the low ground about Aldea Tejada. The day advanced, yet there was no general action. Wellington went to sleep, desiring to be roused when the French left, then pointing towards the Rodrigo road, reached a certain wood. Lord Fitzroy Somerset duly awakened his Chief, who, mounting the hill, gazed steadily on the French array, and seeing how great was the gap between the moving hostile divisions and the centre, he gave the signal for battle. The whole line, pivoting upon the mountain block, descended into the lower

ground, moving upon the flank of the erring enemy, while the Third Division threw itself forward on the front of the column, and Cotton's horsemen were straining to charge. The contest was brief, for the French division was crushed by the infantry and ridden over by the cavalry which came like a torrent up the valley, and in less than an hour Marmont's line of battle was irretrievably broken. At the earliest perception of the danger, when he saw that Wellington, detecting his rashness, had prepared to strike, he rode forward to rectify or mitigate the blunder, but was hit severely and carried from the field. Bonnet, who succeeded, shared a like fate, and then the heavy task fell upon Clausel. At that time the whole British line had swung forward, pivoting on the left, until it was again parallel to the Tormes, so swift had been the stroke, and the great cavalry charge had spent its terrible force; so that the French, still numerous, were driven to the verge of the forest. By great energy and greater skill, Clausel, himself wounded, formed a fresh front of battle, and even made an attack; but at the right moment, when there was apparent danger, Wellington, ever watchful and resolute, brought up the Sixth Division, frustrated his able foe, and continued to push him back. Clausel was now fighting to cover his retreat. He had one great advantage. The Spanish garrison posted in Alba de Tormes had been withdrawn without notice to Wellington, and thus the French got clear off in the gloom; for Wellington, thinking Alba blocked, pursued to the Huerta ford, where he found no one; his great plan was thwarted by Spanish neglect. It was in riding to the Huerta ford that he was struck by a shot which

happily first passed through a holster. "I saw him late on the evening of that great day," writes Napier, "when the advancing flashes of cannon and musketry, stretching as far as the eye could command, showed, in the darkness, how well the field was won; he was alone, the flush of victory was on his brow, and his eyes were eager and watchful, but his voice was calm and even gentle." How different from the fierce and angry countenance and silent, abrupt bearing seen by the same acute observer on the Sierra of Busaco. It marks the difference between a retreat upon Torres Vedras before the "spoilt child of victory" and an advance which was to carry him to Madrid.

Clausel with his diminished host was forced persistently back upon Burgos. King Joseph, who had moved out of Madrid over the Guadarama mountains, hearing of Marmont's defeat, returned hastily to his capital, which he had to quit again in disorder, because the Allied right wing was at his heels, and there was no succour nearer than Suchet. Wellington entered Madrid on August 12th, and was welcomed as a deliverer by the people, who "crowded around his horse, hung on his stirrups, touched his clothes, and throwing themselves on the earth, blessed him aloud as the friend of Spain." When he had forced the French garrison in the Retiro to surrender, Madrid for a time was free from the enemy. Yet not for many weeks. One object of the campaign was to set free Andalusia, and it was accomplished. Soult, reluctantly obeying the orders of King Joseph, raised the siege of Cadiz, destroyed guns and stores, and a fortnight after Wellington entered Madrid had passed through Seville on the road to

Valencia. An Anglo-Sicilian expedition was at Alicant; Hill watched the passes through the Sierra Morena; and Spanish troops should have followed the French to the Alcaraz mountains, but did not, which had serious results at a later period.

Now it was when the British General received sure intelligence that Soult was leaving Andalusia, that he quitted Madrid to push his warfare beyond the Douro. Nor did he move a moment too soon; for the enterprising Clausel drove the Spaniards from Valladolid in the middle of August, Foy made a bold dash down the river to pick up the garrisons left in Taro and Zamora, and the safety of the road to Salamanca was imperilled. But when on the first week of September Wellington crossed the Guadarama and moved upon the Douro, Clausel drew in his daring troops, Valladolid was recovered, and the able Frenchman was forced back, not only to Burgos, but to Briviesca on the Oca. The obstacle now was the castle of Burgos, heavily armed, garrisoned by seventeen hundred French troops, and commanded by Dubreton whose fame rivals that of Philippon. Upon the speedy reduction of this stronghold much depended; for it was a question of time, since if Soult could not be detained beyond the Tagus, or if a French army could be collected to relieve the place, the Allies would be forced to retreat upon Ciudad Rodrigo. Wellington began the siege on the 19th, hoping to finish it early, but it was strong, his guns were few and insufficient, the assaults failed, the Portuguese troops were inapt for the work, and the enemy was ingenious as well as bold. Not only were the means inadequate, but the General underrated the task,

and after more than a month spent in desperate efforts to beat down the work, he was obliged to raise the siege and hurry away.

For the French General Souham, sent from France, had assembled an army at Briviesca and was moving forward. The combinations designed to embarrass Soult had failed; he had joined Joseph at Almanza in the first days of October, and both were advancing on Madrid. Nothing stood in their way except the army under Hill on the Tagus, and he could not encounter the combined forces of Soult and the King. Andalusia had been relieved, but the whole available French strength was thereby enabled to converge upon the Allies. With one body numerically superior close upon him, and a still more dangerous foe pointing towards his line of retreat upon Portugal, it behoved Wellington to seek safety. Nor was it easily attained. For Souham came on with resolution; and it was only by the daring step of crossing the Arlanzon under the guns of the castle, a feat done by night with deftness and celerity, that the army was drawn out of reach. Yet the whole road backward to the Douro was the scene of recurring combats, for the French are great in pursuit, and all Wellington's coolness and judgment was required to extricate himself from his peril. He succeeded, and on the 29th, eight days after he filed past Burgos, his army was over the Douro. The bridges were broken behind him, but a French captain and his company swam the river at Tordesillas and won the tower there, a feat which would have enabled Souham to cross, had not Wellington at once moved his army to the left and forbade the attempt. At this time Hill was still on the

Tagus, and opposite to him the King's powerful army under Soult. The English General was so trusted by his chief that he gave him the choice of his line of retreat, but he expressed his preference for the Guadarama route which would enable the two fractions to unite. Hill took that line, yet not before he was pressed; and removing or destroying the stores in Madrid, he passed the mountains, and took the shorter line to Alba de Tormes, because Souham, being expeditious in bridging the Douro, obliged Wellington to retire direct upon San Christoval, instead of effecting a junction with Hill at Arevalo on the Adaja. Thus on November 8th, after much marching and fighting, the chief and his lieutenant, at the head of sixty-eight thousand men, were united and arrayed near the battle-field of Salamanca, while the combined armies of the French, a hundred thousand strong, were rushing down upon them over the plains of Castille and Leon.

The English General held his ground and rested his wearied troops, prepared to fight if he could, to retreat if he must. While Marshal Jourdan counselled battle, Soult preferred to manœuvre, and his advice prevailed. But it was not until the 14th that the French host, diminished by detachments to ninety thousand men, began the operation of turning the British position by ascending and crossing the Tormes in the hope of gaining the road to Ciudad Rodrigo. Then the Allied host was concentrated on the old battle-ground and held there in the hope of being attacked; but as Soult still worked away to his left, Wellington resolved, although they were so near, to march round the French army, a feat which he accomplished by dint of audacity,

swiftness, the aid of a thick fog, and better roads. An astonishing exploit, even in war where so much is unexpected, and only explicable on the supposition that Wellington's marches, victories, and good fortune had given him a mastery over the minds of his antagonists. Thus the roads to Ciudad Rodrigo were secured, and on the 19th the troops were back on the Agueda. The retreat from Salamanca was not made without losses of men and baggage, the capture of General Paget, and one sharp combat on the Huerba; but there the pursuit stopped, and the campaign was over. A little later the army went into winter quarters over a wide territory, and the man who was the soul of the war in the Peninsula, ever active in so many and such divers ways, began to meditate those final plans which brought his prolonged and mighty exertions to a victorious close. "Although we have not been able to hold the two Castilles," he wrote to Dumouriez, November 30th, from Freneda, "our campaign has not been a bad one, and we are in a position to make a good one next year." Such was his modest way of describing a great success.

The circumstances of the hour were growing more and more propitious. Napoleon's gigantic Russian invasion had gone to wreck. On the day when Wellington flitted so deftly from Burgos, the French Emperor had just seen the last of Moscow, and at the moment when Wellington was writing the letter which has been quoted, Napoleon was dating his despatches from villages on the right bank of the ice-laden Beresina, which he had crossed three days before. The full extent of his prodigious misfortunes was not then known in Freneda, but enough

had been reported to render it certain that the genius of Napoleon would be taxed to keep a hold on Germany, and that he would have few resources or none to spare for Spain. Another fact, which gave some little help, was that the Cortes had sanctioned the appointment of Wellington to the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish armies; and during the winter he visited Cadiz in order to make the arrangement as solid and useful as might be possible. Far greater in importance was the increased weight conferred on him at home by his victories and the evident fruits of his victories. He was raised to the rank of Marquess, thanked again by both Houses, and granted £100,000. The Opposition no longer spoke of him with contempt. Lord Grey, who, having objected to the vote of thanks proposed after Talavera, had handsomely retracted his earlier opinions when Masséna was driven from Portugal, now joined Lord Wellesley in his attack on the Government because they had not sufficiently supported their great General! As Wellington stood apart from politics and served his country, the wholesome change wrought at home by the magician success, increased still further his moral power, not only over the British, the Spaniards, and the Portuguese, but over the enemy. Therefore, when he received reinforcements during the winter, especially in cavalry, he was able under better auspices and on firmer ground to prepare for the coming campaign.

The awful disaster in Russia had placed the defenders and invaders of Spain on less unequal terms. The French army of occupation, diminished in number yet still reckoned by the hundred thousand, was without a competent head, for Joseph had induced his brother to

recall Soult, and Napoleon imposed on his subordinates in Spain tasks which a captain equal to himself alone might have been able to achieve. He underrated the obstacles, did not or would not understand that the political and military facts had become adverse to his cause, and that there was at hand a genius who could profit by the conjuncture. Wellington, indeed, was now to secure the reward of his long tried patience and ever active skill. During the spring of 1813 he set on foot a series of operations all over Spain and on her coasts which occupied, bewildered, and paralysed the French commanders, organised strongly his own army, which exceeded seventy thousand men, framed a plan of campaign which the adversary could not or did not penetrate, and then, suddenly breaking in upon them where he was least expected, shook down the fabric of their power at one blow. The months of labour, the astute contrivances, the assiduous care which embraced small things as well as great, and the far-reaching application of sound business principles to the furtherance of his design, must be digested in detail to be appreciated. Here we can only deal with the bold outlines of the fascinating story.

The French armies were scattered between Toledo and the Pyrenees, expecting an attack but uncertain where the stroke would fall, when the Anglo-Portuguese army, quitting winter quarters, started forward into the heart of the disarray. Sir Thomas Graham with forty thousand men moved first, stealthily crossing the Douro at Oporto and Lamego, and working through the Tras-os-Montes in order to surprise the French on the Esla. When he was well forward, Hill brought up the right

wing to Bejar, and the centre assembling in front of Ciudad Rodrigo, Wellington rode in from Freneda and joined that body. Both pushed out towards Salamanca, flanked by Spanish cavalry, and it is written that on passing the Agueda on May 22nd the General rose in his stirrups, took off his hat, and cried "Farewell, Portugal!" So the columns strode along, the French outposts falling back before them, and so well-timed were the marches that both Generals arrived together on the Tormes, where the Frenchman, Vilatte, waited too long, and being overtaken near Santa Marta and Aldea Lengua, his troops suffered and he lost six guns. That encounter was followed up by a march on the Douro at Zamora and Toro, whither Graham had not yet come; but by the end of the month his junction with the other columns was secured. For Wellington, leaving Hill in command, had passed over the Douro in a basket slung on a rope stretched from rock to rock, and his presence in Graham's camp supplied a stimulus which always told. Then the difficulty of crossing the Esla was overcome, and bridges being laid on the Douro, the whole army, ninety thousand strong, with one hundred guns, was soon in line on the right bank of that river. As the troops were eager and hardy, and the leading good, a fortnight had sufficed to draw this mass together from widely separated starting-points, and the result was a complete surprise to an adversary ignorant of Graham's march, the mighty array beyond the Douro seeming to have sprung out of the earth. The French, astonished and hesitating, abandoned Madrid and managed to hurry their divisions over the river and get well upon the high road to France. After a halt at Toro, the pursuers

sprang forward on June 4th, and on the 7th they were over the Carrion; King Joseph was driven to Burgos, the Spaniards swarming on his flanks and the Allies at his heels. He did not halt, but, blowing up the castle of Burgos, hastened with his stores, his host of followers, his court and his treasure, over the Ebro, holding Pancorvo and its forts to cover his position, hoping that he might be allowed to regain the lost initiative. Not so. Wellington, working by his left, swung over the Ebro far above Miranda, opened communication with Santander as a new base, and swept through and over the stony and rugged hills by roads and no roads which fairly turned the enemy's right, his soldiers on their arduous way meeting unexpectedly and beating two French brigades. Thus on the 18th, while Reille, who had suffered in that combat, held a position on the Bayas stream at Subijana, the main body of the French filed through the pass of Puebla into the valley of Vittoria, where, after a long race, it was brought to bay. For Reille, unable to stay on the mountain, went over the Zadorra on the 19th; and Wellington, using the following day to reconnoitre, framed his plan of battle.

The Zadorra, flowing from the eastward until it reaches the hills, is there shouldered off abruptly to the south and enters the Ebro through the defile of Puebla. Within the elbow formed by the river was the French position. The right was high up at the bridges, near Ariaga and Gamara, Major and Minor, not far from Vittoria. There Reille, the best French soldier on the field, held a position which guarded the high road through Tolosa to Bayonne. But the main body was posted on a transverse

ridge six miles to the westward, its right resting on the Zadorra where it bends to the south, its left upon the mountain running east from the Puebla defile. Behind Vittoria, blocking the royal road, were the military chest, the baggage, the equipages of the Court, and the artillery-parks. The army was diminished by a strong detachment sent with a convoy towards France, but General Clausel was approaching from the side of Logroño, and Foy, who was in Guispucoa, was ordered up to Vittoria. Those two, although Clausel came near, never reached the field.

Having inspected the ground, and being always inclined to go forward and get close—he was cannonaded during his ride — Wellington resolved to direct Graham against Reille's troops at Gamara and Ariaga, send Hill through the Puebla defile to attack the left on the ridge, and lead his main body himself straight through the mountains upon the right and centre of the French line. The troops were in movement at daybreak on June 21st, 1813, but they had steep and rough ground to traverse, and the action did not begin until the forenoon, when Hill, having cleared the defile, pressed in upon the French left. At this time Wellington's divisions were over the hills and among the woods in the Zadorra valley, heading for the bridges, none of which had been broken. Away on the British left, beyond the visible spires of Vittoria, the smoke of Graham's guns rose above the trees and their muffled roar was faintly heard. A peasant informed Wellington that the bridge at Tres Puentes was unguarded, and Kempt's brigade of the Light Division was instantly sent across, established close to the French line, and

employed at once to fall on the foe up the river, and enable the Third and Seventh Divisions to cross almost unopposed. Then the Fourth advanced over the bridge of Nanclares, and thus the fight was developed on a broad front. Hill had gained ground on one side, Picton and Dalhousie on the other, while the sound of Graham's battle became more and more audible. The French line was shaken and the King intent on retreat, when Wellington, who had ridden far to the front, seeing that a hill near the village of Arinez, in the centre of the position, was barely guarded, himself took the Third Division—Picton riding at its head, dressed in a blue coat and round hat,—led it at a running pace diagonally across the front of both armies, and carried the hill. The combat now raged along the ridges with great fury, for the French were fighting to gain time and form afresh to the rear. That time was not granted. The hills and the villages were seized, and sweeping onward the Allies drove the enemy step by step through the fields and woods close up to Vittoria, and all the time Graham's artillery thundering on their right rear quickened their pace or steadied their resistance, for as the sound did not advance it showed that Reille held his ground. The strife in front of Vittoria was fierce, desperate, and prolonged until the line was turned; and as the transport blocked the high road to Bayonne, Joseph was obliged to retreat on Pampeluna. Reille all day defended his bridges, which were taken and retaken more than once, and saved the army, for he did not yield until the leading pursuers from the main battle rushed in upon him; then he ably drew off, hotly followed, and getting through Metauco

in the darkness, joined the flying host on the road to Pampeluna.

Such, in brief, was the decisive victory at Vittoria. The enemy's loss of men, including prisoners, was hardly greater than that of the Allies—five or six thousand. But they lost one hundred and fifty out of one hundred and fifty-two guns; all their ammunition-waggons, baggage public and private, their provisions, transport-animals, and one million sterling of treasure; Jourdan's baton, much jewellery, many pictures, and a mass of official records, were taken, while the field was littered with the plunder which the King and his Generals had endeavoured to carry away. The Swiss did not capture more when they surprised Charles the Rash at Granson in 1476, and took his camp and all that was his to the value of three million crowns.

While King Joseph retreated through the mountains to France pursued by part of the Light Division, Wellington was intent on keeping him separated from Clausel, or snapping up that General if he gave a chance; and Graham went down the royal road to deal with Foy. Clausel gave no chance, but descending the Ebro to Saragossa, hastened thence northward, and regained his country by the pass of Jaca. In passing by Pampeluna the King reinforced the garrison, and Foy, before retiring through Tolosa, filled San Sebastian with good troops. None of the invading host save Suchet now remained in Spain, and he was, or thought he was, fully occupied by the insurrection and the Anglo-Sicilian army in Valencia and Catalonia. In order to secure a new base on the Biscayan coast Sir Thomas Graham was ordered to invest and besiege San Sebastian, and Wellington disposed the rest

of his army so as to blockade Pampeluna and cover the siege operations. A fortnight after the battle of Vittoria the foreposts of the Allied army were on the French frontier, facing their redoubtable adversaries from the famous pass of Roncesvalles to the mouth of the Bidassoa.

On the first day of July Napoleon in his quarters at Dresden received disquieting news from Spain, referring apparently to Joseph's retreat from Burgos upon the Ebro. Whatever the scope of that intelligence, it was of a character to make him adopt a strong resolution. Addressing Soult, then in his camp, he said, "You will start before ten o'clock this evening, travel incognito, reach Paris on the 4th, obtain the best information from the Minister of War and the Arch-Chancellor; stay not longer in Paris than twelve hours, but continue your route to take the command of my armies in Spain." Soult obeyed with such diligence that on July 12th he reached Bayonne and took on himself a burden too heavy for Joseph and Jourdan; and although the army was not in Spain, it still derived its title from that ill-used country. Napoleon, at this time fresh from his latest triumphs at Lutzen and Bautzen, hoped that his lieutenant would preserve the line of the Ebro and ward off danger from that quarter. An armistice had stopped hostilities in Germany, but it only covered preparations on both sides for a future and deadlier struggle. While providing Soult with nearly a hundred thousand men, the Emperor believed he could make head against the coalition. To Caulincourt, his plenipotentiary at Prague, where the Powers were conferring, he said, "Tell them that if they wish to prolong the

armistice, I am ready; if they wish to fight, I am ready;" and reporting what was the fact, that on July 24th (25th really) Soult had marched on Pampeluna. "The English," he said, "surprised by a prompt movement which they did not expect, were falling back" before the Marshal's host.

And it was so. Sir Thomas Graham began the siege of San Sebastian on the 10th; on the 25th his troops were repulsed in an attempt to storm through the breaches, and Wellington hastening to the camp suspended all further operations, because while there he got the news that Soult, whose advance was expected, had burst in on the right of the British line. Therefore Wellington hurried back to Lesaca, and arrived in time to deal with his formidable adversary. Then ensued that exciting strife on the mountains and amid the valleys which can only be appreciated if studied in detail, for which here there is no space. In order to cover Graham's siege and the blockade of Pampeluna, the greater part of the British army was posted on the north side of the central ridge which crossed all the ravines and vales from Roncesvalles to Lecumberri. Thus the line was long, and by selecting the extreme right as the point of attack Soult secured to himself the greatest advantages and the best chances of beating his opponent in fractions. He therefore cleverly assembled Clausel and Reille's divisions near St. Jean Pied de Port, and directed them upon the passes of Lindouz and Ibañeta, while d'Erlon's divisions, starting from Espelette, assailed the centre under Hill. The advance was made on the 25th, the very day when Wellington galloped to San Sebastian; and it succeeded

so far as to press back both fronts, yet not enough to master the ridge on the first day. For Cole and Byng stoutly resisting on the British right, and d'Erlon halting after a fierce combat on the Col de Maya, Wellington was able, when he rode to the front on the 26th, to direct all the troops within reach upon the valley of Lanz, where they would be in communication with Picton who took command on that side. So on the 27th the whole line was in full retreat. The French followed fast, but on that day Soult, with Clausel and Reille's men, pouring through the Val Zubiri, were stopped by Picton who faced about on the hills near Pampeluna. The same evening, when the French endeavoured to seize the heights above Zabaldica and Sauroren, they were promptly repelled by Cole, and forced to form up in the narrow highlands between the Val Zubiri and the valley of Lanz. Then Wellington arrived. He had ridden down the Lanz valley from Ostiz, and had entered Sauroren as Clausel was approaching along the hills. He wrote a dispatch on the bridge parapet, which Lord Fitzroy Somerset, his sole staff officer at that moment, carried to Hill and Dalhousie who were approaching from the left. Then he rode up towards Vilalba, and as his well-known form and face appeared the troops sent up hearty cheers of welcome. It is related that Soult was pointed out to Wellington as he sat on his horse separated from the Marshal only by a narrow gulf; and that the British Captain then uttered some sentences which have become famous. "Yonder," he is reported to have said, "yonder is a great commander, but he is cautious, and will delay his attack to ascertain the cause of these cheers; that

will give time for the Sixth Division to arrive and I shall beat him." The Sixth had been told they must arrive at their destination, and he knew they would obey. Thus, when night fell and a tempest shook the hills, both armies stood between the Guy and the Lanz torrents, making ready for the morrow. On that day, the 28th, Soult's troops attacked with great heartiness, but, as foreseen, the Sixth Division had come up on the British left, and the French were repulsed again and again, even when they had perseveringly climbed on to the rocky crest. When the evening came, Wellington's sixteen thousand, though considerably diminished in number after the "bludgeon work," as he called it, had victoriously thwarted the valorous onsets of nearly double their strength, and the main purpose of Soult was frustrated.

For the British divisions, marching in the mountains, were nearer together than the French, the Light Division only being, or seeming to be, afar and in danger. Quiet prevailed on the 29th, but on the 30th Soult joined d'Erlon, who had come up to Lizasso and was about to fall upon Hill's weaker force. The French Marshal formed a new plan of operations which would have placed his army in Guipuscoa; but he reckoned without his host, for on that very day, while d'Erlon was fighting Hill, Wellington struck a direct blow at Reille and Clausel on the old ground of Sauroren, defeated them utterly, pushed on in pursuit, compelled a great body under Foy to retreat on France by a separate line, and thus left Soult himself isolated with only one pass open to him, that of Doña Maria. Over it he went, and though closely pursued he halted in San Estevan.

It was here that except by one exit he was surrounded. Wellington, watching from the hills, awaited the fitting moment to close on his opponent. Straggling was prohibited, no fires were permitted. But suddenly he saw three red-coated marauders, who had entered the valley, snapped up by four French gendarmes, and soon after the drums beat and the enemy was seen in column of march heading for Sumbilla and the bridge at Yanzi. The British followed, the Spaniards came down to the bridge, the Light Division appeared on the other bank of the Bidassoa, and the French filing through the narrow ledge between the cliffs and the torrent under a hot fire, turned off towards Echallar. From that point they were driven on August 2nd, and on the 3rd, after ten days of march and battle, the French were again in their own frontier. The losses in both armies had been great, but the defeated French were the more heavily punished. In the combat near Echallar Wellington was nearly captured as he was examining his maps. His forward habit constantly led him into peril, but he never grew more cautious either in action or on the march, and always rode where he judged his presence would be useful. He has been blamed for not, while his opponents were in disorder, at once pushing his advantages. On the spot he judged differently, and considered that San Sebastian must be reduced before he entered on so great an enterprise as the invasion of France. Besides, Suchet in Catalonia inspired him with misgivings. In the Spanish war he had never to reckon with only the enemy in his front. It was his duty and habit to survey the whole political and military field, which really embraced Germany as well as Spain, and follow that

course which seemed most likely to secure solid and lasting results.

Therefore he resumed the siege of San Sebastian. During the whole year he was not seconded by the Government at home as well as he should have been; for not only did the Ordnance Office languidly comply with demands for guns and ammunition, but the Admiralty did not maintain such a squadron on the coasts of Spain and Portugal as would have enabled supply-ships to sail when required, and might perhaps have prevented the French from pouring men and stores into the fortress by sea. When the battering-trains did arrive, the complement of ammunition was not in quantity proportioned to the guns; so that there was first delay and then grave neglect, and Wellington did not leave the Admiralty in doubt respecting his opinion of their shortcomings. The plan of attack was censured at the time, apparently on grounds justified by the results; but to say that the place was taken by accident is a perverse exaggeration. It was won by sheer valour; and the explosion which gave so decided an advantage to the assailants was one of a kind not uncommon in war. The siege was begun again on August 5th, when Soult had been chased to his frontier, but the real work could not commence until the 22nd, because the guns from home had not arrived. The assault was made on the 31st and the garrison driven into the castle, where the stout governor, Emmanuel Rey, held out until September 8th, when his rocky refuge was a ruin. The operations were impressively dramatic, and gave full scope to the bravery of the Portuguese as well as to the heroism of the

British soldier; but some hideous atrocities which followed on the storming, although they were perpetrated by a few, threw a dark stain on the whole, unjustly perhaps, yet inevitably, and the sack of San Sebastian figures as an indelible disgrace. Neither Graham nor Wellington could have prevented the shameful acts which filled them with rage, but both deeply resented and finally repelled the calumnies which like a monstrous growth sprang out of facts sufficiently horrible in their naked reality. The officers on duty did all they could to restrain and punish the offenders. Wellington's share in the siege was intermittent, he had so much to do, and besides, the business was Graham's; but he did more than once interfere, and four days after the assault he was on the breach in conversation with Colonel John Burgoyne, who had succeeded to the command of the Engineers when Sir Richard Fletcher was killed. The loss inflicted on the Allies in this murderous siege approached the total of three thousand killed and wounded, and the garrison were reduced to one half their original strength. At this price the General bought a fortress of the utmost value to him as a secure place for hospitals and magazines, although the value was impaired by the dreadful conflagration begun by the French as part of the defence, and perhaps enlarged by the plunderers.

Unwilling to allow San Sebastian to fall without another attempt to delay if not avert its capture, Soult crossed the Bidassoa on the last day of August, when the stormers were vainly struggling to win the breach and the shot from Graham's guns were smashing the curtain wall above them. He had made close and powerful combinations to break through the Allied line, and his

columns did push up the huge spurs of the Pena de Haya mountain; but, forewarned, Wellington was prepared and ready to repel the front attack. The French came on in two large masses between Irun and Vera; one under Reille was repulsed on the heights of San Marcial, where, stimulated by Wellington's voice and gestures, the Spaniards were prevailed upon to stand alone; the other, commanded by Clausel, after pushing up the steeps, was paralysed by a strong demonstration on his left rear from the side of Lesaca. In the afternoon a tempest deluged hill and valley, staying the battle and converting the stream into a swollen torrent; and while the greater part of the French got back in safety, one brigade was caught at the bridge of Vera and lost its general. The stroke was heavy, but it failed to relieve San Sebastian; the aggregate losses of both sides exceeded five thousand men, so well did each fight; and in the end Soult felt constrained to stand on the defensive for the future, and use the pick and spade to fortify the slopes and summits of the folded hills between the Nivelle and the Bidassoa.

He had more than a month for preparation. There were three things which operated to hinder the advance of the Allies—the steadfastness of the Governor of Pampeluna, the state of the war in Germany, and the superiority maintained by the French on the east coast of Spain, where, although Suchet had retired to Catalonia and blown up the old walls of Tarragona, he still defeated Lord William Bentinck at Ordal, and held on to the province. But when Pampeluna surrendered at the end of October, when the intelligence from Saxony showed that Napoleon was worsted by the Allied armies, when it seemed almost

certain that Suchet would not act with Soult, the Field-Marshal finished the plans for the invasion of France which he had resolved to undertake as soon as San Sebastian fell. "I am waiting here [Lesaca]," he wrote to his brother on September 12th, "till the animals of the pontoon-train will be relieved from the work consequent on the siege, when I shall cross the Bidassoa," showing that even then his plan of movement was conceived. From Vera, October 31st, he wrote, "It is impossible that Napoleon can stand, and the Confederation of the Rhine is gone." At that time, however, his troops had entered France. The able manœuvres which carried him over the frontier began on October 7th by the passage of the Bidassoa. Long prepared, and preceded by movements designed to deceive his adversary, when set in operation they took Soult by surprise. For the Allies broke in upon his long line of earthworks, obstructions, and mountain crests, precisely where they were not expected. Calculating the time to a minute, the time being dependent on the tide, Wellington sent a strong column from Fuenterabia and Irun over the river just above its mouth, poured a serried host from the heights of San Marcial and the bridge of Vera upon the centre and left, and fighting all day, not only mastered the low country towards the sea, but drove the French out of their strong works thrown up to defend the rugged hills, and on the 8th captured and occupied the very summit of the Great Rhune, the loftiest hill in those parts. So that the French were forced back into the fortified lines constructed on both banks of the Nivelle, and Wellington again proved to Soult that he could cross a river in the face of a large army. Another month elapsed in relative quiet; during

which Wellington tendered his resignation of command over the Spanish army, justly indignant with the Spanish authorities, who shamefully neglected their troops in the field and broke their covenants with the generalissimo. At the same time a very able soldier, Sir John Hope, joined the army, where his presence was most welcome, the Field-Marshal's three lieutenants being now Hope, Beresford, and Hill. Early in November another forward move was made, and on the 10th and 11th the Allies, skilfully directed, tumbled the French out of all their fortifications, drove and followed them over the Nivelle, taking fifty-one guns, all the field-magazines, and many hundreds of prisoners. By the 12th Soult was established in and about the entrenched camp at Bayonne, a series of formidable works on both banks of the Adour. Though he required every available sabre and bayonet for offensive operations, Wellington at this time ordered all his Spanish troops, except Morillo's division, into Spain, as a punishment for their deeds of plunder and outrage in contravention of his proclamation, which he intended should be obeyed, promising protection to the persons and property of the French people. This evident proof of his good faith brought provisions to his camps, but the violence of the Spaniards and the want of money, always very pressing, prevented him from carrying out his great plans. Early in December, despite difficulties of all kinds, he once more assumed the offensive and effected the passage of the Nive above its confluence with the Adour. The work was finely done on December 9th, but as the Allied army was separated by the Nive, Soult thought he had a good chance of winning a victory by falling on the left under Hope,

thus taking advantage of what is called Wellington's over-confidence. He therefore started forth, and during three days strove ineffectually to profit by the opportunity thus offered. Failing to defeat Hope he turned upon Hill, and on this occasion had his best chance; but Hill was equal to the stress put on him, and Wellington, who had watched and sustained the battle with fresh troops, taking the offensive, Soult again thwarted drew his main body over the Adour. The Allies lost many hundreds and had five generals wounded. The French loss was more severe, and at the end of the last day's fighting three German regiments passed into the camp of the Allies.

Another period of comparative inactivity followed—comparative, for although the troops were quiet, their captain was incessantly occupied, devising modes of feeding them, wrestling with the foolishness of the Spanish, Portuguese, and British Governments, even with the gold he received coining Napoleons, because that money could be the more easily exchanged by his soldiers. His repeated and plain-spoken remonstrances had produced some change for the better in the Admiralty, and consequently in the co-operation of the Navy; still he had to resist plans suggested from home, and he always suffered from want of funds. But when the Allies had crossed the Rhine, and Napoleon had begun his inimitable though fruitless campaign of 1814, Wellington also pressed upon his able adversary, whose forces had been diminished to reinforce the Emperor, and yet remained within a few hundreds equal to those of the British Field-Marshal. In February he was once more in motion, executing a plan which was not his least

masterly conception. Intending to invest Bayonne, he boldly resolved to throw a great bridge over the Adour below the town, and to facilitate the project assailed the French left, thus drawing Soult away from the fortified camp, while Sir John Hope and Admiral Penrose worked together to bridge the broad tidal stream. Repeated and successful manœuvres and attacks between the upper course of the Nive and the Adour deceived and bewildered Soult, who receded farther and farther from the decisive point. Then Hope accomplished his daring enterprise with greater daring, and between the 24th and 25th of February, after severe labours, he mastered the river and invested Bayonne. By the time this great exploit was finished, Wellington had compelled Soult to retreat over the Gave d'Oleron and even the Gave de Pau, on the right bank of which he halted to fight at Orthez. Beresford passed the stream some miles below, and moving up the right bank to Baïghts, covered the passage of all the army at Berenx, except Hill's two divisions, which were opposite the bridge of Orthez and threatened the French left. Soult, uncertain of the strength before him, formed a fresh line of battle, and on February 27th, instead of being as he had designed the assailant, found himself the defender. For some time he kept Beresford at bay on his right, repelled an attack on his left, and thought he was about to defeat his old opponent. If so, he was over sanguine. Wellington, who had been watching the conflict from an elevated central position on the site of a Roman camp, finding he could not break in on the French right wing, developed a powerful attack along the whole front, and sent the Fifty-second regiment across a marsh to smite

the exposed inner flank of the right wing. Hill at the same time ascended the river to find a point of passage, and by the time he was crossing at Souars the combined onset organised on the Roman camp, especially the hardy march and fighting of the Fifty-second, had disordered and overthrown the enemy, who, finding himself worsted at all points and Hill menacing his rear, yielded the field, and only essayed a formation to cover the retreat. As Hill was now over on the Pau road, that line was gone, and Soult was obliged to flit away towards St. Sever on the Adour, in order to preserve his communication with Toulouse. He succeeded by dint of rapid marching, breaking down as he moved the bridges on the many streams. In this battle the French lost six guns, and Wellington was wounded, being struck from his horse; yet he speedily rose to his feet, and, it is said, laughed at Alava, who was hit in a soft part, always a source of mirth. The contusion, or the deep bridgeless rivers, perhaps both, stayed the rapidity of pursuit, and the next day all the French on the St. Sever road were over the Adour. Hill, moving on the right, had a smart skirmish with Clausel at Aire, defeated him and seized his magazines. Those at Dax and Mont San Marsan also were captured.

The French Marshal, now cut off from Bordeaux, fearful of being driven into the Landes, and still hoping that Suchet might come to his aid, clung to the spurs of the Pyrenees, and covered the roads to Toulouse. Wellington followed as far as the country about Aire, but there he halted for some days, having detached Beresford and two divisions to Bordeaux. The Bourbons were already in the field, but the General did not

directly help them, being restrained from that course by his own Government, and honestly stating the truth to the Bourbon partisans, who incurred his wrath when they endeavoured to force his hand. Finding Wellington inactive, Soult actually resumed the offensive on March 13th, pushing his divisions close up to Aire. That bold movement, however, did not succeed; for Wellington, who had got back Beresford and one of his divisions from Bourdeaux, retorted on his adversary with such vigour that he was forced to fall back rapidly through Tarbes and St. Gaudens to his entrenched position at Toulouse. At this time the population of the districts through which poured the stream of warfare, far from rising in arms, did nothing to aid Soult, and brought provisions readily into the British camps, and they did this because they were scrupulously well treated and paid for all they supplied. "The English General's policy," a French official wrote, "and the good discipline he maintains does us more harm than ten battles; every peasant wishes to be under his protection." That is decisive testimony, if any were needed; but it must be admitted that the Spanish divisions, sent back because they were guilty of outrage, yet some of which he was obliged to call up afresh, nearly effaced by their crimes the good feeling won by the General's noble conduct. The French peasants were tired of the long and exacting wars of Napoleon, and, if they were not eager for the Bourbons, they were athirst for peace.

Soult believed he could make good his strong post in front of Toulouse; for he had fortified the Mont Rave, a high ridge rising between the stream of the Ers and the canal on the eastern face of the town, while the

entrenched suburb of St. Cyprien in a loop on the left bank defended the bridge over the Garonne. The Allies came up on that side, but in order to master the defences of Toulouse, after several tentative measures above, Wellington, keeping Hill before St. Cyprien, threw his bridges below, sent over all the other divisions, and cutting off Soult from Montauban, moved up the Ers into the narrow space between it and the French lines. That involved a flank march by two divisions under fire, in order to reach and storm a height on the south. The troops endured the loss and carried the height, and although the Spaniards suffered reverses from assaulting the northern redoubts too soon, and Picton was repelled when he changed a false into a real attack, yet Beresford's divisions, the Fourth and Sixth, overpowered their foes, and charging along and through the works on the Mont Rave, obliged Soult to withdraw behind the canal; yet he still held fast to the redoubts and bridges which defended and gave access to the Carcassonne road, his only available line of retreat. This was not done without much persevering fighting, and always at great risk; but it was done. The French lost five, and the Allies four generals, and several thousand men killed and wounded. Soult, fearing that he might be cut off altogether, withdrew from Toulouse on the night of the 11th, leaving eight guns and his wounded to the conqueror, who the next day entered Toulouse.

Here terminated the last act of Wellington's campaigns, begun in Portugal and finished in France. The sanguinary fight on the Garonne, and the still later sortie from Bayonne, were both subsequent to the abdication of Napoleon. That great event was virtually completed on

April 7th, but not officially communicated to the Allied Powers until the 11th, and, of course, could not be and was not known to Soult before the battle of Toulouse. Nor would he recognise the fall of his Emperor until an aide-de-camp brought the authentic papers from Napoleon himself. Then the British army which had done so much was dispersed, and its General travelled to Paris, where he arrived early in May to find himself Duke of Wellington. He was not allowed to stay long in the French capital, as his presence was requested in Madrid, where Ferdinand the Seventh of evil memory had at length ascended the throne. To that monarch he gave honest advice, but it availed nothing. As a grandee of Spain the Duke was entitled to keep his hat on in the royal presence, but he did not know it. During his stay in Madrid, the King showed himself to the people from a balcony of the palace, while his suite stood in a room behind. "The people, I believe," said Wellington to Croker, "and the King desired me to come forward, which I did bare-headed; of course I should have done so anywhere else. The King immediately said to me 'be covered'; in the face of the people I could not at once bring myself to do it, but the people about us hastened to remind me that I was a grandee of the first class, and that I ought to have been covered." Fortunately he had been engaged in more serious labours than a study of the privileges belonging to a Spanish grandee. Quitting Spain, he returned in June through Paris to England, having been abroad, steadfast in his country's service, without a break for five years!

What he did in that period we have seen. How crowded, how splendid the vista which runs back from

the triumph of 1814 to the passage of the Douro in 1809! He had freed Lisbon the year before, now he was to set forth upon an enterprise in the success of which few believed—the liberation of Portugal, as a step to the liberation of Spain. But, although Napoleon was the master of the continent, Sir Arthur Wellesley, when he began his stupendous task, saw the weak plates in the giant's armour, and believed firmly that he could pierce his vitals. Napoleon also detected at once the new power which had struck into the strife on the Peninsula, and, after Oporto, he never ceased to tell his brother and his Marshals that there was nothing in Portugal or Spain "except the English." That was why his great lieutenant, perhaps his greatest, Masséna, was sent to overwhelm the dreaded adversary. In the Prince's path arose not only the soldiers of Busaco, but the Lines of Torres Vedras, which revealed the most profound, as well as the grandest conception of the time. The defence of those Lines was the turning-point in the war, and if the large consequences did not make the British Ministers see that every man, gun, and guinea they could spare should be given to Wellington it was because the Ministers were not, nor could they be expected to be, the equals of the General who alone at that time, scanning the future, foresaw what could be done. It was his patience, not less than his vast business knowledge and inventiveness, which helped him to win. He could wait as well as strike. His enemies called him cautious and timid, just as after Talavera they called him rash and adventurous; yet in one winter he wrested from them two great fortresses, and made them the warders of the little realm he guarded; and when he had fixed himself

firmly on his frontier, he marched into Spain, beating Marmont at Salamanca, as he had beaten Masséna at Fuentes d'Onoro. Frustrated at Burgos, and followed in retreat by a great host, he showed Soult on the Tormes that he could manœuvre as well as fight; and, when once more in Portugal, he had the satisfaction of knowing that his marches and battles had raised the siege of Cadiz and liberated the whole of Andalusia. Napoleon went to Russia and furnished the opportunity for which Wellington had fought and waited and watched. The next campaign carried his country's flag through the field of Vittoria to the crests of the Pyrenees, expelling from Spain all French armies save one on the east coast, and bringing the invasion of France within the reach of his arm. Nothing stopped him when he sprang forward, neither the fortified mountains, nor the deep and abounding rivers, nor the gallant soldiers of France, nor, at the end, the mighty entrenchments of Toulouse. We can see the shining results of five years' unremitting endeavour, and track the passage of the great captain from the Rock of Lisbon to the shores of the Garonne; but what none can now fully realise are the vast and varied obstacles which beset his career and that of his matchless soldiers, and the ingenious devices which he contrived to lessen or overcome them. That which carried him through was not only his quality as a great and daring commander, but his honesty and uprightness as a man. His single aim was the service of his country, and he never swerved from that high standard throughout his long ordeal. He defined himself, in regard to Spain, as a *conquérant sans ambition*, adding, "all the world knew that I desired nothing but to beat the

French out of Spain, and then go home to my own country, leaving the Spaniards to manage theirs as they pleased." And we have seen that his endurance, moderation, and genius enabled him to achieve his desire. All through his life it will be found that Duty and Service were his guiding stars. He went home from the field of his infinite labours. Peace seemed to have closed a horrid era of bloodshed; yet only seemed, for the great conqueror, who was *not* without ambition, was brooding in his Island of Elba how he might retrieve the throne he had solemnly renounced, if not the predatory Empire which he had staked and lost.

CHAPTER IX

WATERLOO

WEARY of war, yet proud of her own unyielding obstinacy in the prolonged contest, England heartily welcomed back a General who, like John Churchill a hundred years before, brought home her colours, rent indeed in the tempest of battle, yet untarnished by defeat. If his strong character was not spoiled by popular applause, it was not the fault of his admirers. When he reached Westminster Bridge on June 23rd, 1814, the multitude dragged his carriage to the house of the Duchess in Hamilton Place. The next day Lord Bathurst hurried him to Portsmouth, where the Regent and his guests, the Emperors and Kings, were to witness a naval review. Returning, he took his seat as a Peer—all his titles having been conferred since he sailed for Lisbon in 1809. He was thanked and congratulated on the part of the House of Commons by a committee of fifteen, as was the Duke of Marlborough; and on July 1st, clad in Field-Marshal's uniform and wearing the Garter and the Golden Fleece, he thanked the House in person from a place within the bar on the left of the entrance, expressing his gratitude for "the noblest gift that any subject had ever received"—the grant of £400,000 voted on May 12th. A week later he carried

the Sword of State when the solemn Thanksgiving for peace was rendered in St. Paul's; and in July the city gave him a banquet in the Guildhall. It was the high, yet not the highest tide of his popularity—that was to come; and we may infer from his letters that without being unduly elated, he received plaudits and honours alike as marks of the confidence felt in him by the princes and the people. But his judgment was not misled, nor was his manly simplicity of character impaired by this outburst of enthusiasm in all ranks.

The Duke did not long enjoy a well-won period of rest at home. Always ready, as he told the House of Commons, to serve his Majesty in any capacity, the Ministers speedily sent him as ambassador to the capital of France, precisely where his presence, one might have imagined, would be unwelcome to so many. On his road he took a military survey of Belgium, when his eye was attracted by the position at Waterloo in relation to the great lines of operation from the side of France, and he reported on the fortresses which were the wrecks of the old Barrier. The embassy to Paris was not productive of much advantage. Before the winter came, hostility was shown by the courtiers in the palace, as well as the Bonapartists in the streets, and the Ministers, fearing that some mischance might occur, were anxious to bring him home. They invented the pretext of sending him to command in America, but he steadfastly refused to be frightened away, and so far prevailed that Lord Liverpool at length gave him permission to select his own time of departure from a post he should not have been selected to fill. He said that, as matters stood, the Ministers could not allow him to quit Europe; for,

were insulted by the men about the King. "I know all that we have to fear," he added, "but I would rather be brayed in a mortar by Bonaparte than humiliated by fellows who never fought. *Les émigrés ont encore perdu le Roi.*" The statement was not true of all the Marshals, but the words of Ney fairly paint the time. The Bonapartists may have conspired *sur la place publique*, but Napoleon knew well what armed support he would get when he embarked at Porto Ferrajo, whence three thousand years ago Etruscan Populonia drew its stores of iron.

The sovereigns and plenipotentiaries at Vienna acted with promptitude and unanimity. On March 7th, when the courier brought Wellington the news from Florence that Napoleon had quitted Elba, they set their armies in motion towards France, and Metternich records that at Presburg a few days later a regiment of cuirassiers defiled before Wellington on its way to the Rhine, which a short time before he had seen in Vienna on its road to quarters in Hungary. Wellington himself, as usual, looked to business and was at ease. "You will have seen what a breeze Bonaparte has stirred up in France," he wrote to his brother Henry on March 24th. "We are all unanimous here, and in the course of about six weeks [rather a sanguine estimate] there will not be fewer than seven hundred thousand men on the French frontier. I am going to take the command of the army in the Netherlands," where, we may note, the Prince of Orange, if not General Kleist, was in great alarm. "Hurry out everything: no time must be lost," the Prince wrote to Lord Bathurst on the same day, when Napoleon, reported to be at Lille, was actually in the Tuileries, where

he had been installed three days. In Paris shrewd observers at that moment, looking realities in the face, saw in the return from Elba "war—implacable, immediate, universal," not only because Napoleon was a menace to "the Kings," but still more a menace to liberty. Napoleon, said M. de Fontanes to Villemain, "Napoleon cannot endure this time, because he no longer enjoys the natural conditions of life." His quarrel is now, said another, "more with the peoples than their rulers"; he might conquer at first, but he must fall in the end. One pulse throbbed throughout Europe, and in France there was neither hope nor enthusiasm outside the pale of the army. Napoleon, who had renounced his solemn renunciation of the French throne, was placed by the Congress *hors la loi* in the declaration adopted on March 13th, and the treaty of the 25th provided the means of enforcing the judgment of the public tribunal. It was after this instrument had been signed that Wellington started for Brussels, where he arrived on April 4th.

There he began the hard task of forming an army, managing the King of the Netherlands—"the most difficult person to get on with I ever met"—and knitting closely his relations with that portion of the Prussian army which had been brought on the ground. The English Ministry found it impossible to furnish the promised quota of troops from any source, nor could they supply Wellington with the forty thousand British infantry and fifteen thousand British cavalry with which he would have been satisfied. Yet by degrees the trusty little host grew stronger as the transports poured into Ostend and the continental troops assigned to him reached

Belgium; but at the end of May he could only muster one hundred and five thousand men of varied nationalities for all purposes, while the British and Germans, upon whom he could thoroughly rely, formed little more than a third of the force available for service in the field. At the same period the Prussians had become a considerable mass, and both armies were in close communication. Napoleon, on regaining power, at once set about organising an army on the basis of the troops he found afoot, but a large nominal force of all kinds only gave him some hundred and thirty thousand men for the invasion of Belgium. He tried hard, but failed, to gain time; and then instead of waiting until the Allies were ready to attack, he quitted Paris on June 12th and fell upon his foremost foes. The quality of these three armies varied greatly. Napoleon's array was one of the best he ever led, being composed in the main of veterans. The Prussians were all of one nation; they also had fought in the War of Independence, and were animated by the fierce and lofty spirit which years of subjection had aroused. The Duke's army was composite—Britons, Hanoverians, Dutch, Belgians, Brunswickers, Nassauers,—in no way equal to the hardy soldiers who stormed through the Pyrenees. "I command a very small British army with a very large British staff, to which my superiors are adding every day," he wrote three weeks before the campaign opened. At an earlier period he begged the Horse Guards to refrain from forwarding more generals until they sent him troops. He thought the British Government were afraid "to touch the question of war," they had so "unaccountably delayed their preparations." In the end, he had to do his best with an army which

contained only thirty thousand British troops of all arms, including the German Legion which was second to none.

When Napoleon drove out of Paris on June 12th the Allied forces in Belgium, the only part of the Great Alliance ready for battle, were posted at different points between Oudenarde on the Scheldt and Liege on the Meuse. The British, on the right, drew their supplies from Ostend and Antwerp, the Prussians from Cologne. Blucher had his head-quarters at Namur, Wellington at Brussels; and each was prepared to assist the other by marching to the right or left, or concentrating on the centre, should that be assailed. Now through that centre ran the high road to Brussels, cut almost at right angles at Quatre Bras by the transverse line of communication between Nivelles and Namur which secured the connection between the two armies. Wellington's troops, except the reserve in and near the Belgian capital, were all to his right, or west of the central highway, and Blucher's on the left, except that Ziethen's corps was in Charleroi and extended beyond it up the Sambre towards Maubeuge, and therefore in front of the British troops near Mons. Napoleon, noting this distribution, resolved to strike at the line of junction, hoping that by long swift marches he might interpose a mass between the two, defeat each in succession, or drive them to unite if they could beyond Brussels. It was a bold project, but one which imposed on his troops labours greater than they could perform, and in addition allowed nothing for accident or fortune, requiring, for success, the exact and punctual fulfilment of its exorbitant demands. Wellington did not divine,

as it is called, the plan of this master in the practice of war, and thought to the end of his days that Napoleon might have done better; and this "mis-judgment," though it did not prevent his success, is paraded as a proof of his inferiority as a general.

Napoleon, therefore, started with a great advantage—he was going to strike where he was least expected; and by skilful management he was able to concentrate his army, almost though not quite unobserved, just within the French frontier, opposite the supposed gap or weak place through which he intended to break. His departure from Paris was known at Namur and Brussels. Ziethen's troopers, who kept a vigilant watch, saw the red flush of the French bivouac-fires above the forest; and the Allies were alert and ready to move. Wellington did not issue any order or change the distribution of his divisions when he knew only that Napoleon was on the frontier, but he was prepared to march to his left just as Blucher was ready to close to his own right. The difference was that Wellington desired some definite indication that the Emperor was not about to strike at his communications with England, whereas Blucher, who had no need to fear for his line of supply, was eager at the first warning to take up a position for battle. So it fell out that on the night of the 14th, when Napoleon's orders were actually issued, Blucher directed Ziethen, if attacked, to retire fighting on Fleurus, and his three other corps to concentrate behind it at Sombreffe. But on the 14th no information whatever reached Brussels which went farther than the fact that Napoleon was on the frontier. The reason for the difference is that the Prussian outposts touched the French army, and there-

fore the intelligence from the front went swiftly to Namur and slowly to Brussels. The situation strongly illustrates the grave danger attending the operations of allied armies acting in concert from divergent bases under independent commanders. *One* Commander-in-Chief would have known all that was to be known, and have guided himself accordingly.

While the Prussian corps were moving on the 15th from Liège, Namur, and Ciney, towards the chosen field of Ligny, not a man stirred from the British cantonments. The French at dawn sprang forward in three columns—Reille and d'Erlon down the Sambre; Vandamme, Lobau, and Napoleon direct from Beaumont upon Charleroi; and Gerard from Phillippeville upon Châtelet. Though Ziethen forgot to break down the bridges, still he ably handled his retreating troops, delayed the enemy, kept up a bold front, and at eventide remained in possession of Fleurus. Accidents and misunderstandings for which Napoleon did not allow actually occurred, and at night the farthest points attained by his leading troops were Frasne, Wagnée, and Lambusart. The rear extended to the right bank of the Sambre near Charleroi and to the left bank of that river opposite Châtelet. The Emperor was satisfied with the day's work, and, if we may judge from his language, retired to Charleroi in the confident belief that the next day his troops would be in Brussels.

Not the faintest intimation that anything unusual had occurred in the valley of the Sambre reached the British head-quarters until three in the afternoon. For eleven hours there had been steady marching and fighting, within forty miles of Brussels and ten miles of the

British outposts at Frasne, yet not a whisper of conflict was heard by Wellington. The Prince of Orange rode in from Nivelles and brought to the Duke about three o'clock a report that some skirmish or hostile movement had happened at Thuin; and a very little later General Müffling received a despatch from Namur giving the same or similar intelligence. Upon that Wellington would not act decisively: he awaited a messenger from Mons; but he issued orders for all the divisions to concentrate at fixed points and stand prepared to march. Sometime before midnight direct information came from the outposts of Mons, all there being quiet, that the French attack was directed upon Charleroi, where the infantry fire was very hot, and then he sent out orders for the troops to march by Nivelles, Braine le Comte, and Enghien, that is from right to left, towards the scene of conflict. The reserve was to march from Brussels by Waterloo and Genappe. At midnight the Duke called on Müffling to tell him what he had done, so that Blucher might be informed. "The numerous friends of Napoleon here will be on tiptoe," he said to the German General, "the well intentioned must be pacified; let us therefore go to the Duchess of Richmond's ball, and start for Quatre Bras at 5 A.M." The remark and the action are alike characteristic of one whose equanimity rarely broke down, and never in moments of peril. He had done all he could when his orders were issued, and, considering how strong the French, or rather the Bonapartists, were in Belgium, he was wise when he showed his serene and cheerful countenance at a ball destined to be famous.

In the morning he set out for the front, and near Waterloo passed the reserve, then halted and eating

their breakfast, and riding onward reached Quatre Bras about eleven. Finding that the French were only skirmishing with the outposts towards Frasne, he sent an order for the reserve to march from Waterloo, and then rode off by the Namur Road to the Prussian position, which he entered by the right rear, and joined Blucher at the windmill of Bussy, between Ligny and Bry. There he undertook to give the Prussians direct aid, providing he was not attacked himself; but, from his own observation and the reports of Sir Henry Hardinge, he gravely doubted whether the Prussians would be able to escape a defeat, and, when he got back about three o'clock to Quatre Bras, he saw enough to convince himself that he also would have a hard task to maintain his ground.

At this moment, when the struggle on both fronts had begun, when the sound of Napoleon's battle was audible plainly at Quatre Bras, and Ney's onset had become severe and continuous, we may briefly sketch the general situation. Blucher had concentrated three corps at Ligny, and would have had four but for one of those accidents which are not infrequent in war. The Emperor, in error at first respecting the strength of the Prussians—he called them a body of troops—as soon as he was better informed, brought up two corps and the Guard, keeping Lobau in reserve. On the Brussels road Ney had two corps, but it was not until about three o'clock that the whole of one of them, Reille's, was up to the front, while the other, d'Erlon's, the victim of error and zeal, wandered between the two armies all day, useless to either. Wellington's divisions, except two Dutch-Belgian brigades present on the field, were all

on the march, and on their arrival he depended to frustrate Ney. Müffling, seeing the state of affairs on the spot, had taken care to let Blucher know that no help could come to him from his ally. On his return from Bussy the English General found the Prince of Orange contending with a force superior in all arms yet not strong enough to seize Quatre Bras. The Duke's presence gave new life to the battle, and when Picton's division, followed by the Brunswickers and van Merle's Belgian horse, arrived, he took the offensive, pushing forward right up to the edge of the farm of Gemioncourt. Ney, reinforced by the rest of Reille's corps and part of Kellerman's cavalry, violently retorted, and in the charge, which partially broke into spray before the squares, Wellington ran the risk of death or capture. But he leaped his horse over the Ninety-second Highlanders lining the ditch on the Namur road, while his gallant pursuers, cut up by the infantry fire, were killed or driven off. Ney was further reinforced by more guns and cavalry, and Wellington's brigades continued to arrive in parcels. The Marshal was always superior in horsemen and cannon, but after five o'clock his opponent had larger numbers of foot. Holding firmly to the cross roads and the highway to Namur, Wellington became the stronger as the day waned; and when the Guards emerged from the Nivelles road and the Allies pressed forward, Ney, who had no fresh troops, was driven back, and his antagonist remained at sundown master of the whole field of battle. The position was maintained, but the cost was great, for there were no fewer than four thousand six hundred killed and wounded, more than half being British soldiers. The thunder of

cannon to the eastward had also died away, but none knew as yet at Quatre Bras how Blucher had fared at the hands of his redoubtable foe.

Wellington, who slept at his head-quarters in Genappe, was on the field and scrutinising his outposts at day-break on the 17th. Soon after came a report, confirmed a little later, that the Prussians had retreated on Wavre. Their rear-guard had remained all night near the French, and when they retired by Tilly and Gentinnes, their foes missed all trace of them. Napoleon had a belief that Blucher would retreat upon Liège, which caused him at a late hour in the day to despatch Grouchy to that side, and thus touch was lost. While the French were cooking and Napoleon was pondering, definite intelligence was brought to Wellington, who, learning for certain that Blucher was at Wavre, promised to stand fast himself at Mont St. Jean and fight, if Blucher would support him with two corps. The intrepid Marshal replied that he would come with his whole army, and Wellington got the famous answer before night. Thus was made, between generals who thoroughly trusted each other, that combination which led to the Battle of Waterloo. It was no chance combat, but the result of a deliberate design, rendered capable of execution, even when Blucher was wounded, by his resolve to retreat upon Wavre, and by Napoleon, who acted on conjecture that the Prussians would hurry towards their base at Liege. The morning at Quatre Bras was peaceful; the Allies cooked their food before starting rearward. Wellington, it is said, lay down for a moment, and snatched perhaps a little sleep. There was no stir in front or on the exposed left flank; and,

covered by a strong display of horsemen, the Allied divisions tramped steadily towards Mont St. Jean. Napoleon had hesitated long before he took any decision; and when about mid-day Ney's horsemen showed on the highway and Napoleon's leading squadrons were approaching from Ligny, there was no force near Quatre Bras except cavalry. The Duke was still to the fore. As the French came on, the heavy and light brigades retired over the Dyle by fords or through the defile of Genappe. The French horse followed and beyond Genappe essayed a charge, at first with some success, but soon they were overborne by the First Life Guards, and then held aloof. So the retreat continued all day. A thunderstorm, so often a precursor of Wellington's battles, deluged the fields with rain, and pursuer and pursued, struggling through the mire, were drenched to the skin by nightfall. Napoleon was with the light horse in advance when they halted at La Belle Alliance, and fired a few guns which were answered from the opposite ridge. D'Erlon, Lobau, and the Guard had come up, but Reille was still at Genappe, and did not rejoin until the next morning.

The results of two days' warfare may be thus summed up. Napoleon had inflicted a defeat, yet not a decisive defeat, upon the Prussians, who escaped from his ken to Wavre. He had then, at a late hour on the 17th, detached Grouchy with thirty-three thousand men to follow them, and Grouchy at night from Gembloux reported that they had retired in three directions. Moving himself in the afternoon, Napoleon, uniting with Ney, had pursued Wellington to Mont St. Jean, and slept in the comfortable belief that he had separated the Allies. At that

very time Wellington, who had assembled his whole force except seventeen thousand men, including the British brigades who were posted at Hal and Tubize, was in close communication with Blucher, and intended on the 18th to stop Napoleon by delivering battle, and to hold him fast until Blucher could cut in on his right flank and rear. Thus it was the Allies who were united practically, and the French army which was separated into two groups unable to support each other. Considering that in the estimation of a modern school of English military critics Wellington and Blucher were second or third-rate generals, and that the former roughly pitched his estimate of Napoleon's presence at forty thousand men, the facts, on the evening of the 17th, tell rather in favour of second-rate generalship. But the truth is that the military critics, after years of investigation and deep study, possess a knowledge not vouchsafed to either Napoleon or Wellington, and its fruit is the kind of judgment, *après coup*, which is supposed to be so instructive and is often so unjust. What would Napoleon or Wellington or both not have given for one tithe of the exact information which enables criticism to make use of the advantage which its enlarged horizon affords—that is, to judge the generals by a series of facts and results which were not, and could not have been, known to them at the time!

The tempest which burst over the retreating columns on the 17th followed them to their bivouacs and raged all night, and did not cease until late on the fateful Sunday. Wellington, mounting his faithful Copenhagen at break of day, rode from the village of Waterloo to the field, where the armies on both sides, protected by watchful

sentries, were still contending with the mischiefs inflicted by the storm. The position was the crest of a gentle slope stretching from Smohain to the Nivelles road, having upon and in advance of its right the château, garden, and wood of Hougoumont, and in the centre, where the Charleroi road cut through the little ridge, the farm of La Haye Sainte. Both these posts were occupied, but the latter, unfortunately, not so solidly as Hougoumont. The greater portion of the Allied army, forming the right and centre, was on the west, and the left along the Wavre cross-road on the eastern side of the highway. Behind Hougoumont the ground trended back towards Braine la Leud and Merbe Braine, and here the reserves were posted. It was, indeed, combined with Hougoumont, the store-house and strength of battle. The front, about two miles long, was held by infantry and guns; the cavalry, except two light brigades on the extreme left, were in rear on the gentle northern slope, and invisible from the French position. Behind all were the Dutch-Belgian cavalry, the Brunswickers, and, after the action had begun, Lambert's British brigade from Ghent. The position was well filled by the sixty-nine thousand men of all arms and one hundred and fifty-six guns which were present that day.

Napoleon, who slept at the farm of Caillou, and who had been out on foot to the front during the night, was also early in the field, and glad of the gift which he thought fortune had placed in his hands. When Reille had joined him from Genappe, he had seventy-two thousand men, all admirable soldiers, and two hundred and forty guns, with which to engage in combat, and he reckoned that the chances were ninety to ten in his favour. He mounted his

charger, reconnoitred his opponent's position, and then gave the orders which, promptly and finely obeyed, disclosed the French array. There were two lines of infantry, two of heavy cavalry, backed by a reserve of both arms, and finally the imposing masses of the Imperial Guard. The front stretched from Frischermont, across the Charleroi to the Nivelles road, and one may imagine with what admiration and interest Wellington and his officers watched the formation of that grand example of order and power, and listened to the outcries which greeted the Emperor when he rode along his majestic lines. It was now nearly eleven o'clock, and, although his opponent knew it not, Wellington had got news of the march from Wavre of Bulow, whose leading troops were actually, at that time, close to the wood of St. Lambert on the French right; while Grouchy was at Sart les Walhain, between Gembloux and Wavre.

It is not practicable here to give a full account of the battle of Waterloo; we can only describe its broad outlines. The first gun was fired about twenty or thirty minutes past eleven, and preluded a dashing and sustained attack on Hougoumont, which failed to carry the house, garden, or orchard, but did gain the wood. It was probably intended to divert attention from the attack on the left and centre, which Ney, massing his guns opposite the British left, was preparing to execute. Wellington watched and in some measure controlled the fight for Hougoumont, and then rode off to the centre, taking post at a solitary tree which grew near the Charleroi road above La Haye Sainte. Ney at half-past one sent forward the whole of D'Erlon's corps, and although some of them pushed close up to and over the

Wavre road, stormed the orchard of La Haye Sainte and took the Pappelotte farm, yet at the critical moment Sir William Ponsonby's Union Brigade of horse charged into the French infantry, already shattered by the fire of Picton's troops, and the net result of the combined operation was that two eagles and three thousand prisoners were captured, while nearly that number of killed and wounded remained on the ground. On the other side of La Haye Sainte the Household Brigade, led by Lord Anglesea in person, charged in upon and routed a large body of French cuirassiers. The grand attack thus completely failed, and the centre, like the right, remained intact. It was just before this combat began that Napoleon saw something like troops towards St. Lambert and despatched two brigades of light cavalry to reconnoitre. A Prussian staff officer was caught beyond Planchenoit, and from him came the unexpected and unwelcome information that the whole Prussian army was approaching; and after the defeat of D'Erlon Napoleon detached Lobau's corps to cover his right, the Imperial Guard moving up from Rossomme to take his place. So that two heavy blows came almost together, and the force pressing on Wellington was reduced by more than ten thousand men, the first fruit of the steady Prussian advance.

The signs of danger on his right flank, the punishment of D'Erlon's corps, the ineffectual attempt upon the British Guards in and about Hougoumont, were followed by a kind of pause, and the combat reverted to cannonading and skirmishing. But towards four o'clock Napoleon, increasing the fire of his artillery, threw forward a mass of cavalry, forty squadrons, and then

began that series of reiterated onsets of horse which lasted for two hours. Their advent was foreseen, and the infantry west of the Charleroi road went at once into squares and oblongs, a form devised by Major, afterwards Sir James Shaw Kennedy, so that the horse, which rode through the batteries in the crest, wasted themselves in vain against the intrepid infantry. Twice they were driven down the slope, and the third time, when they came on, they were strengthened by Kellerman and Guyot until they reached a force of seventy-seven squadrons, or twelve thousand men; but these also were repulsed, the British horse, what remained of them, charging when the French were entangled among the squares and disordered by the musketry and guns. Four times these fine troopers charged, yet utterly failed to penetrate or move a single foot battalion. But some time before the final effort, Ney by a fierce attack got possession of La Haye Sainte, and thus, just as the cavalry were exhausted, the French infantry were established within sixty yards of the Allied centre. And although the Emperor was obliged to detach one-half of his Guard to the right, because Blucher had brought into play beyond Planchenoit against Lobau nearly thirty thousand men, still the capture of La Haye Sainte was justly regarded as a grave event. Wellington during the cavalry fight had moved three brigades on his right nearer to Hougoumont, and had called up Chassé and his Belgians to support them; and it was a little before this time that he cried out to Brigadier-General Adam, "By G——, Adam, I think we shall beat them yet!" A little later Shaw Kennedy, in some trepidation, rode up to the Duke to report that the centre of the line was

open, for the Hanoverians had been wasted away by the ceaseless fire. "This very startling information he received with a degree of coolness, and replied to with such precision and energy, as to prove the most complete self-possession." He said to Kennedy, "I shall order the Brunswick troops to the spot, and other troops besides; go you and get all the German troops of the division to the spot that you can, and all the guns that you can find." The Duke himself led forward the Brunswickers; the Hanoverians and Nassauers rallied; Vivian's cavalry rode up from the left, where Ziethen's advance was in sight; the danger passed away, and Wellington rode back to the rear of the Foot Guards.

The crisis of the battle had come for Napoleon. Unable after eight hours' conflict to do more than capture La Haye Sainte; hardly pressed by the Prussians, now strong and aggressive; owing such success as he had obtained to the valour and discipline of his soldiers—the Emperor delivered his last stroke, not for victory—he could no longer hope to win—but for safety. He sent forward the last ten battalions of his Guard to assail the British right, and directed the whole remaining infantry force available to attack all along the line. The Guard marched onward in two columns, which came successively in contact with their opponents. Napier's guns and the British Guards, who rising from the ground showed across the head of the first column, fired heavily and charging drove them in confusion back towards La Belle Alliance; and the second column, struck in flank by the musketry of the Fifty-second and Ninety-fifth, was next broken by a bayonet charge and pursued by Colonel Colborne to and beyond the Charleroi road. As Ziethen's Prussians were

falling upon the French near Pappelotte, and Pirch and Bulow wrestling with the Imperial Guard in Planchenoit, Wellington ordered the whole of the British line to advance. The cheers arising on the right where he was, extended along the front and gave new strength to the wearied soldiers. He led the way. As he neared the Charleroi road, the riflemen, full of Peninsular memories, began to cheer him as he galloped up, but he called out, "No cheering, my lads; forward and complete your victory." He found that good soldier, Colborne, halted for a moment before three squares of the rallied Imperial Guard. "Go on, Colborne," he said; "better attack them, they won't stand." Nor did they. Wellington then turned to the right, where Vivian's Light Cavalry were active in the gloom, and we next find him once more with the Fifty-second near Rossomme, the farthest point of the advance, where that regiment halted after its grand march over the battlefield. Somewhere on the highway he met Blucher, who had so nobly kept his word, and it was then that Gneisenau undertook to chase the fugitives over the frontier. The French, or perhaps we should say the Napoleonic army was destroyed, and the power which its mighty leader had built up on the basis of its astonishing successes was gone for ever.

Wellington returned to the village of Waterloo that night, and as he dismounted, after having been so many hours in the saddle, his trusty Copenhagen, still fresh, gave a playful kick, remembered by his master in after years. How he felt after his well-won triumph has been often recorded. The man who has been lightly accused of having a cold heart wept bitterly when the strain of duty was relaxed, and he saw the list of killed and

wounded. What can better illustrate the iciness of his nature than the expressive saying, drawn from him by Waterloo, that "nothing is worse than a victory except a defeat," or the manly pathos of his letters to the relatives of his dead friends. But there was nothing of the actor about him, and that defect, if it be one, is mistaken for cold insensibility by the lovers of the theatrical element in daily life as well as in war. Dr. Hume found him in bed early on the morning of the 19th. "He had as usual taken off his clothes but had not washed himself. As I entered he sat up in bed, his face covered with the dust and sweat of the previous day, and extended his hand to me, which I took and held in mine, whilst I told him of Gordon's death, and of such of the casualties as had come to my knowledge. He was much affected. I felt the tears dropping fast upon my hand, and, looking towards him, saw them chasing one another in furrows over his dusty cheeks." That is a picture of private life, and it is not the only example of Wellington's genuine tenderness of heart, exhibited in the quiet days of peace as well as on the morrow of a tragic victory.

What was his share in the supreme triumph achieved on the Eighteenth of June 1815? After years of eager investigation it has been discovered that he should have fortified and garrisoned the farm-buildings of La Haye Sainte with more care, and that he should have summoned Colville's two British brigades from Hal. These are the two heinous faults which minish his renown, although committing them he still won the day. Next it is said, not, however, by the same order of minds, that he owed his success to the Prussians. Certainly, just as the Prussians owed their success to the

British. The latter had been fighting stiffly for five hours before a Prussian shot was fired, and they fought on for nine hours. But that was the bargain. Wellington was to run the great hazards of a battle long enough to bring the Prussians into action, and he redeemed his pledged word, not less, assuredly, than Blucher, a worthy comrade, redeemed his, not merely by fighting, which came later, but by pushing forward Bulow's leading troops, which compelled Napoleon to detach Lobau as early as two o'clock. The full stress of the Prussian battle was not developed until after six o'clock, and even then the defeat of the Imperial Guard preceded the capture of Planchenoit. But why dispute over shares of glory when there is so much for all?

It is not necessary to follow the Allied armies in their march on Paris, and it may be sufficient to say that on July 3rd, fifteen days after the rout of Waterloo, hostilities ceased, Paris capitulated, the French army retired beyond the Loire, and on the 8th the Bourbon King entered the capital of France. Wellington had done all he could to restrain the anger of Blucher, who wished to hang Napoleon if he caught him, and blow up the bridge of Jena. The Emperor fled to Rochefort and the *Bellerophon*, escaping from Blucher to perpetual exile at St. Helena; and Wellington rescued the bridge from destruction by reason and good management. To his great influence, also, France was indebted for the slight territorial changes made in her frontier. Practically his active military life ended on July 3rd, 1815; but he sojourned in France three years longer in command of the Army of Occupation. During that period he was requested to adjust, and did adjust, the

many grave questions arising out of claims on France and counter-claims by the French. He reduced the amount against her by nearly one-fourth; and finally, although adverse to his own personal interests, he persuaded the allied sovereigns to terminate the occupation, which by treaty might have been continued for some years. He never afterwards commanded an army in the field. His career as a Man of Action was over.

And now we may glance back on that career, and ask whether it is or is not the career of a Great Captain? The question is not so foolish as it looks, because high authority has recently denied him a place in the foremost rank of commanders. Lord Wolseley has declared that Wellington cannot be placed in the first line of generals because he did not secure, or even try to secure, the affection of his soldiers. Certainly that never was the motive of his conduct. He had a totally different idea of the duty alike of citizen and soldier; that idea he always tried his utmost to realise, and it was not to make himself beloved, but to perform his task faithfully and if possible which was not easy, make others perform theirs. But if he was not adored like Napoleon, he was loved by the men he led so well; for if not, why did Napier print that truthful and touching dedication which stands on the first page of his immortal book? "This History," he wrote, "I dedicate to your Grace because I have served long enough under your command to know why the soldiers of the Tenth Legion were attached to Cæsar." No troops ever followed any general with more alacrity, stood fast with more "unconquerable determination," or, at his word, started joyously forward into more deadly perils, than the British and even the Portuguese

soldiers of Wellington's armies. Lord Wolseley also asserts that if Napoleon had been the man he was at Austerlitz he would have won the battle of Waterloo. It is a pure hypothesis, and about as reasonable as one which might be framed thus—if Soult or Clausel, instead of Arabi, had commanded the Egyptian army in 1882, Sir Garnet Wolseley would not have won the battle of Tel-el-Kebir. What is the value of criticism which alters all the conditions on one side, and does not venture to alter them on the other? Napoleon and Wellington and Blucher fought out their fight in the circumstances existing between the 14th and 19th of June. We can only judge them by the light of those circumstances. All else is pure phantasy; and if the greatest general is he who makes the fewest mistakes and does not wage war on conjectural grounds, then Wellington was the greater on the fields of Belgium, for incontestably he made fewer mistakes, and acted on fewer and less dangerous conjectures, than his mighty antagonist. It is an idle controversy. The intellectual greatness of Napoleon is as manifest as his selfishness and freedom from the fetters of moral principle; but it was the radical vices of his nature which rendered his vast, we might say supreme intellect of no avail, and sent him to finish his turbulent life in the dreariness of exile. That form of intellectual activity which is called military genius is, when free from the restraints of all moral principle, a curse to mankind; and that will be an ill day for England when her generals come to prefer and adore such a form; for it makes the soldier of genius master of the State for personal objects, instead of being, what he should be, the servant alike of the State and of the loftiest idea of duty.

Wellington throughout his life used his abilities—call them talents or genius—not to magnify himself, but to serve his country according to his lights. If he is not entitled to rank with the foremost, to be, not the greatest, but among the few Great Captains, it would be interesting to know in what military greatness consists. He succeeded in all he undertook. His Indian career alone presents a model of what a soldier should be, and should have exempted him from the foolish charge of being timid and over cautious, wanting in vigour and decision. We may be allowed to measure a man's genius, if that is the correct word, by the relations which his means bear to the ends he attains. Except Frederick the Second and Bonaparte in Italy, no generals in modern times have performed so much as Wellington with such scanty and uncertain resources. We have also to remember his boundless confidence, his inexhaustible patience in gloom as well as sunshine, and imagine if we can the kind of courage it required to face and overcome the endless obstacles raised up by the British, Portuguese, and Spanish Governments. If we adopt for once the practice of indulging in suppositions, let us ask what might not Wellington have been able to accomplish had he possessed, like Napoleon, absolute command over the wealth and manhood of England, Spain, and Portugal, instead of being obliged to beg for a small army of Britons, deal as he best could with the Regency at Lisbon and the Cortes at Seville or Cadiz; and perform in turn all parts, civil as well as military, which the exigencies of the movement or the paucity of competent men demanded from day to day. Quite apart from the crowning event of Waterloo, there is ample room in

the Indian and Peninsular campaigns of Wellington to give him a place among the foremost warriors. "With a little army," says Charras, "he did great things, and that army was his work. He should remain, and he will remain, one of the grandest military figures of this century." It is a just verdict; and we heartily trust that, regardless of party and faction and self-interest, England's generals, and for reasons as valid, whether they be styled men of genius or men of talent, will always deserve to be ranked with Wellington as the servants of duty and their country.

CHAPTER X

DIPLOMATIST AND STATESMAN

BEFORE Wellington sailed from the Continent in the autumn of 1818, he had accepted the office of Master-General of the Ordnance with a seat in Lord Liverpool's Cabinet. The England to which he returned was neither peaceful nor prosperous. She was exhausted by the long war, her rulers increased the distress by pursuing selfish objects, and it is not surprising that her people were riotous and discontented. Happily the Master-General was not called upon to take an active part in maintaining order, but his advice was sought and given. He busied himself in improving his estate at his own cost, having a profound conviction, on which he always acted, that property has its duties as well as its rights. He spent his entire rental upon the land from which it was derived, draining and fencing, building new cottages, providing large gardens—he held that a labourer should have one acre of land—and promoting the comfort of his tenants to such a degree as to draw praise from censorious Cobbett himself. In dealing with his office he unearthed the arrangements of James the Second, a "weak fellow," but a good man of business. Finding they were "excellent," the Duke brought the

department "back very much to what he had made it," a remarkable fact preserved by Lord Stanhope.

The accession of George the Fourth in 1820 brought to a head the long standing quarrel between that personage and his wife. The sins of both were notorious, but the new King was so unpopular that the people, including all ranks, made a heroine of the Queen. With her the Duke had no sympathy; but he disapproved of the proceedings initiated behind the backs of his Ministers by the King, and only tacitly acquiesced in those pursued in Parliament. At a critical moment, when the Bill of Pains and Penalties had been read a third time by a small majority, and not passed but postponed for six months, he submitted a memorandum to the King, pointing out the peril of pushing the matter further. If it were pushed, inquiry by both Houses was inevitable, "an inquiry," he boldly said, "in which not the Queen, but your Majesty yourself, and your English and Hanoverian servants, and the servants of the Duchy of Cornwall, and those employed by them, will be put on their trial." That memorandum was effectual apparently, for nothing more was done, and the King did not even try to change a Ministry which failed to satisfy his anger. The Duke was made Lord High Constable, and as such, took part in the coronation. It is commonly said that Queen Caroline was refused admission to Westminster Abbey, but the Cabinet decided that she could not be excluded from an open ceremony; a place was reserved for her among the Peeresses, and it was she who refused to enter the Abbey and sit with them. The Duke's part in bringing about the "convulsion," as Canning

called it, which shook the kingdom, was slight and always on the moderating side; and he reminded the King that "every evil which had occurred in the course of the inquiry was foreseen and foretold by Ministers," who, however, which he does not say, could not muster courage to oppose the royal will. In fact, the only Minister who resigned was Canning. The King was furious, but the offence was not mortal, for within two years, chiefly through the influence of Wellington, Canning, on the death of Lord Londonderry, became Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Before that event occurred the Duke accompanied his sovereign to Belgium in 1821, and was his guide over the field of Waterloo. The King listened to his explanations, but showed no special interest, or took it "coolly," as the Duke said, until he came to the grave of Lord Anglesey's leg, and then he burst into tears. He could sympathise, at least, with the loss of a handsome limb.

There was a general peace in Europe, but the Continent was not peaceful. The empires and kingdoms were no longer at war with each other, but, more or less, the people were at war with the emperors and kings. Greece was in open revolt, the Janissaries overawed the Sultan, the Neapolitans obtained a temporary mastery over their monarch, and the Spaniards held their king in practical duress. Then the Holy Alliance came into play in a notably worldly fashion. It was supposed at the time, and may be still, that the British Government was subservient to a sanctimonious confederacy invented by the Emperor Alexander. But even his brothers of Austria and Prussia, who signed the

treaty because they did not wish to offend him, thought he was "affected in his mind." So far as the British Ministers were concerned they had nothing to do with what Castlereagh described as "a piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense," which Alexander himself laid before him. "The Duke of Wellington," he wrote, "happened to be with me when the Emperor called, and it was not without difficulty that we went through the interview with becoming gravity." The Holy Alliance, although England had no share in it, was a real force enough. When the Neapolitans broke into insurrection, the British Government stood out for non-interference, which was always Wellington's doctrine, and declined to be a party to Austrian intervention. The internal conflicts in Spain placed them in still greater hostility to the plans of the Holy Allies. To determine what should be done a Congress was held at Verona, and Wellington was sent thither to represent his country. How he bore himself may be read in his despatches; but he only carried out strictly the policy of his colleagues and his own. Lord Liverpool, writing to Canning before the Congress met, said that even if a change of dynasty were brought about in Spain, it would be no ground for hostile interference by the Powers; and that the conduct and character of King Ferdinand made "even the personal question the weakest he ever recollected in a case of revolution." Wellington at Verona informed the Emperor of Russia that "with us it had become a principle not to interfere in the internal affairs of any country excepting in a case of necessity," and that this principle did not grow out of our parliamentary constitution, but ought to be "the guide of all governments, be their constitutions what

they might." Nothing can be plainer or more consistent with the entire course of Wellington's career. He told the Emperor, at a later period, that, in his anxiety to fight the revolutionists, he had left one ally out of his calculation. "'Which is it?' Alexander asked. I replied, Time! Time would remedy many of the evils complained of as resulting from the Spanish and other revolutions." But if that remedy were awaited, said Alexander, "the *bon gens* and Royalists would be lost." And so they parted. The truth is that the "Ultra Royalists," led by the Comte d'Artois and M. de Chateaubriand, were bent on invading Spain in order to fly the French flag and gather glory for the Restoration. Respecting the heir to the throne, Wellington in 1818 uttered some prophetic words. "The descendants of Louis the Fifteenth," he wrote, "will not reign in France; and I must say, and always will say, that it is the fault of Monsieur and his adherents." It was they who forced on the Spanish war of invasion; and it was they who ceased to reign in 1830. The Congress of Verona was the grand climacteric of the Holy Alliance; and it expired almost before the death of its projector and patron, the Emperor Alexander. One picturesque little fact, outside the gloomy arena of politics, which occurred in the ancient city, has been preserved. Among strange scenes, few are stranger than that of Wellington and the Empress Maria Louisa, mother of the sometime King of Rome, playing at *écarté*, and paying each other in napoleons. She was grateful to the Duke for winning Waterloo, because in 1815 she had a lover, who afterwards became her husband, and she was not in a condition to return with safety to her imperial spouse.

Returning to England in the beginning of 1823, the Duke was obliged to defend, and did defend with point and vigour, the course pursued by himself as the agent of the Government at Verona. There was a strong desire in some quarters to take part with the Spaniards, a desire which even those who felt it would have repressed had they been in office. We have seen what the policy was, how it was adverse to the domineering views of the Holy Alliance, and failed only because England by reason alone could not prevail, and disclaimed the idea of using force on either side. It is instructive to observe that all parties were under the delusion that the French invasion of Spain would strengthen the Bourbon monarchy, a delusion entertained by the French themselves; whereas it was one of the causes which led to the ultimate expulsion of Charles the Tenth. Wellington's course in the matter was honest and above-board, and the sharp criticism showered upon him must be set down mainly to party exigencies as well as parliamentary custom. Canning, more impatient and defiant than the Duke, who never indulged in threats, longed to speak out his mind to the French; but it was not until four years afterwards that he uttered the famous sentence, "I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old," being determined that if France had Spain she should not have Spain and the Indies. The difference between the Duke and his colleague regarding the recognition of the Spanish Colonies was one of degree, not principle. Canning wished to do the thing at once; the Duke, as usual, favoured moderation; yet even he, slow to move in such a matter, saw that recognition must come, only he would

have gone no further than was necessary, but have had each case determined on its merits. At Verona, where the subject was discussed, he carefully left it in such a state that his Government might do what it pleased. If Canning did not exactly call the New World into existence, since it had been more or less much alive since the beginning of the Peninsular War, he did call up something else—the "Monroe doctrine" can claim him as its parent, for he suggested the declaration to Mr. Rush.

At Verona Wellington succeeded in averting a war between Russia and Turkey which threatened the general peace; and Alexander went home a sadder, if not a wiser man. Towards the end of 1825 he died rather suddenly at Taganrog, and his brother Nicholas, by virtue of a family compact, reigned in his stead. Wellington was despatched to St. Petersburg on the accession of the new Emperor, which gave him an opportunity of ascertaining, if possible, the intentions of the Czar towards Greece and Turkey. He was soon involved in a diplomatic tussle, not only with Nesselrode, but with the Emperor also; and in the end he could do no more than defer for a time the meditated attack on the Sultan, and obtain a protocol, having for its object a peaceful settlement of the acute Greek difficulty on a basis suggested by the Russians themselves.

The time was now at hand when he would be summoned to take a more prominent position in the State, so far as office went. George the Fourth made the Duke Constable of the Tower in 1826; and when the death of the Duke of York, early in the next year, left vacant the post of Commander-in-Chief, it was at once bestowed

on the Field Marshal, who announced his appointment to the army with characteristic simplicity and brevity. He was now in his right place, but fate decided that he should not remain in it long. Lord Liverpool, Prime Minister since 1812, fell hopelessly ill, and in April the King, sending for Canning, empowered him in the usual way to reconstruct the Ministry on the principles which guided that of Lord Liverpool. "I need not add," Canning said in writing to the Duke, "how essentially the accomplishment [of his task] must depend upon your Grace's continuance as a member of the Cabinet." In reply to the "obliging proposition" the Duke desired to know who was to be the Prime Minister, and the answer was in brief Mr. Canning, who added that he had laid the letters before the King. Thereupon, observing that he thought Mr. Canning, with the best intentions, would not be able to hold fast the Liverpool principles, the Duke declined to join him and followed up his refusal by resigning the offices of Commander-in-Chief and Master-General of the Ordnance. The Duke was vehemently censured for his conduct, but it should be observed that he had no confidence in Canning, who himself had no right, political or moral, to the co-operation of Wellington. During the Ministry of the brilliant orator the King affected for three months to command the army; the Duke of Clarence became Lord High Admiral; and Russian influences so far prevailed in the Cabinet that the protocol of St. Petersburg was converted into a vague treaty which led to the battle of Navarino, and forwarded Russian aggression quite as much as Greek emancipation.

Lord Goderich, afterwards Earl of Ripon, succeeded

Canning, but he could not hold his colleagues together, and in January, 1828, the King sent for the Duke and made him his Prime Minister. He did not seek the office. In 1827 he said that he should be "worse than mad to think of such a thing;" but when requested by the King he took the post as he had taken others, holding himself to be, as he always put it, "the retained servant of the Crown." It is in this light that we must regard his assumption of a great responsibility, an office for which he said he was not qualified, yet was really far more qualified than many other men. The Canningites joined the Government; and although the Emperor Nicholas, seeing his opportunity, made war on Turkey, the Duke loyally carried out the treaty negotiated by Canning, with the policy of which personally he so strongly disagreed. But he never would consent to be the mere leader of a party; he was always the servant of the State, and kept its compacts.

That conviction of his duty was finely illustrated when he had to deal with the Roman Catholic question. Ireland, as he believed, especially after the election of O'Connell for Clare, was on the verge of civil war, and what civil war is he well knew. Moreover, it was his fixed opinion that "whenever the consent of the Crown could be obtained, the question could be settled." Personally, no religious prejudice withheld him from enfranchising the Roman Catholics; his opposition rested on broad and deep political grounds. But when the tide of opinion in both islands rose to a dangerous height, looking only to the common weal and setting aside his personal bias, he boldly told the truth to the King and secured his needed consent. He remarked

long afterwards, that justice would not be done to his action in settling the vexatious dispute until his communications to the King were published; and those documents, now accessible to all, are his justification. They, and all his writings on his native country show that he did not at any time blink the facts which underlay its unhappy condition. If he were stern in requiring obedience to law, he did not spare "the gentlemen of Ireland," whose treatment of their landed estates and neglect of their duties were so repugnant to his conscience and opposed to his practice. Dreading a civil war, as one who knew what it was, he strove to avert the calamity, and fortunately did not strive in vain. How thoroughly he had gauged the dangers lurking in the whole question may be judged from the fact that, in one of his earliest letters to the King, he foresaw "the possibility—I might state it more strongly," he says, "of the Roman Catholic tenantry refusing to pay tithes or rents. The clergy and the landlords might have recourse to the law. But how is the law to be enforced? How can they distrain for rent or tithes on millions of tenants?" He said it would probably be the first measure of resistance and rebellion; the words testify to his prescience, but the measures foreseen were not attempted until he had been many years in his grave. One might think that the men who set them in motion, not for their own sake, but as means to obtain an independent parliament, had studied and caught up their schemes from the Duke's writings.

He has been taunted with inconsistency because he brought his great influence to bear on all who were opposed to Roman Catholic emancipation; but no act

of his life was in stricter accord with the fundamental principles governing his conduct. Early in the struggle with the King, he said, "It is the duty of all to look our difficulties in the face and to lay the ground for getting the better of them." He had no fixed hostility to the concession; that it had been so long delayed was not his fault; and when he saw that it would deliver the country from a civil war, he thought it high time that the concession should be made. He was right in doubting whether it would pacify Ireland, which he had long seen aimed at independence; but whether it would or not, the contest with rebellion would be less arduous. Politics has been called the science of exigencies, and in this exigency the Duke, keeping the permanent interests of the United Kingdom in view, did what he believed was best for them. It was an act of expediency, and he certainly would never have set it upon what some would call a higher level. In like manner he acquiesced in the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, a futile remnant of exclusiveness which the legislature had to nullify every year by an Indemnity Act! The passing of these measures was accomplished because the Prime Minister of the day was not a party man.

Three considerable episodes, two serious and one comic, enlivened the stormy period of the Duke's administration. The comic episode grew out of the pretensions of the Duke of Clarence, Lord High Admiral. He took on himself to hoist his flag in the Thames, summon his board to Portsmouth, set forth in command of a squadron, all in excess of his powers under the law. The Duke firmly but courteously remonstrated, even the King declared his brother hopelessly in the wrong;

and in the end the Lord High Admiral, unable to prevail, resigned. But he bore no malice, for after defying his board, or council, he ended by shaking hands, and asking them all to dinner at Bushey! Another disturbing influence of a grimmer kind was the Duke of Cumberland; and the constant troubles wrung from Wellington a cry of impatience. "Between the King and his brothers," he wrote to Peel, "the government of this country has become a most heart-breaking concern." Another trial was more grave. Mr. Huskisson thought fit to vote against his Government, and immediately to give the Duke an opportunity of placing his office in other hands. The Duke took him at his word; but Mr. Huskisson did not mean to resign, he meant to draw forth a request that he should stay. The Duke, convinced that "it was not with one individual but a party" that he had to deal, would not entreat; and so Mr. Huskisson went out of office and all the Canningites with him. Principles were paraded, but they were not at stake. The Duke said that he could not get a definition or clear idea of Whig, Tory, Liberal, or Mr. Canning's principles; adding in a pregnant passage—"This I know, that this country was never governed, in practice, according to the extreme principles of any party whatever; much less according to the extremes which other opposing parties attribute to their adversaries." The Canningites were replaced and took their share out of the Government in passing the measure so long supported alike by Castlereagh and Canning—Roman Catholic Emancipation.

The third episode sprang armed out of the heat of the desperate conflict. The old Tories never forgave

the Duke for his desertion as they called it, and Lord Winchelsea wrote and published a letter in which he accused the Duke of having long used "a show of zeal for the Protestant religion" as a cloak under which he might carry out his "insidious designs" for the introduction of popery. The insult was poignant, and as, after repeated attempts to obtain it, full reparation was refused, the Duke demanded "satisfaction." Probably Lord Winchelsea never expected that he would be called to account so sharply, and was astonished when he found that his victim turned upon him. But he would not yield except on the ground, although he went to Battersea Fields with a determination not to fire at the Duke, and when he had stood fire to express his regret. So the duel passed; Wellington fired wide, Winchelsea in the air, and an apology was given in writing, on the ground and publicly. The Duke was a dangerous man to trifle with, but it is notable that he had never been "out" before, and did not possess any duelling pistols. The Duke, however, always held that he was bound to act as he did. Lord Winchelsea, he said to Mr. Gleig in after years, "did his best to establish the principle that a man in my situation must be a traitor unless he adheres through thick and thin to a policy once advocated. His attack on me was part of a plan to render the conduct of public affairs impossible to the King's servants," and thus the admission that he was wrong had to be extorted from him. Nor should it be forgotten that the Duke took up the libel as a public matter. Writing a few weeks afterwards, he said that the duel was "as much a part of the Catholic question as anything else he was obliged

to do." He was living in "an atmosphere of calumny": after the hostile meeting the air was cleared; and if the event itself shocked many good men, still it was necessary in the public interests, and none can say it was not effective in staying the evil.

Throughout the whole contest with the King, the Duke of Cumberland, the Lievens, and the old Tories, he was determined to carry the business, and also "to fight the battle in his own way." How much he felt at times is shown by his passionate outbursts in private, when the strain became too severe or the scenes at Windsor too distressing even for his patience. "If I had known in January 1828," he wrote in November 1829, "one tithe of what I do now, and of what I discovered one month after I was in office, I should never have been the King's Minister and should have avoided loads of misery. . . . I believe there never was a man who suffered so much and for so little purpose." An extravagant picture, perhaps; yet who can say what a man so straightforward and honest must have endured during nearly three years of office from the kind of people with whom he had to deal, not only, if mainly, in conducting home affairs in a troubled time, but in working out a foreign policy left him as a legacy, and in thwarting, so far as he could, the designs of the Russian Emperor and his unscrupulous agents of both sexes. The hope he expressed in November 1829, that he might soon be relieved from the unhappy lot which had befallen him, was gratified a year later, when, after the accession of William the Fourth the Revolution of July was the signal for an imperative demand for the reform of Parliament.

The Whigs saw their chance; the old Tories, bent only on a policy of revenge, gratified their rancour regardless of anything else; in November 1830 the Wellington administration, defeated on a side issue, ceased to be, and the Duke got rid of his heavy burden.

Although out-voted on the question of referring the Civil List to a committee, it was Parliamentary Reform and Tory rancour which killed the Duke's Government. Not that he was hostile to gradual change, such as the transfer of seats from corrupt boroughs to great towns. Had his advice prevailed, Birmingham would have sent members to Parliament long before 1832. He had as keen a contempt for the "boroughmongers" as Cobbett himself, and spoke with indignation of their conduct in selling seats to the highest bidder, which, vile in itself, was also the abuse of a great trust. The close boroughs, he considered, should have been used to bring able men of all shades of political opinion into Parliament, so as to produce a genuine representation, not of numbers but of character and intellect. But the boroughmongers were as faithless to their obligations as the absentee landlords in Ireland, and all landlords who, looking only to their convenience or gains, neglected the duties incumbent on them as owners of landed property. This was the more grievous to him because he held the doctrine that the Constitution had a territorial basis, and that one of its foundation-stones was the influence of real property. When people talked to him of "the rights of the aristocracy," he said he knew nothing of them. The Peers have rights and privileges under the constitution, but "out of doors" the Peers are "no more than others of her Majesty's subjects," except that

they are exempt from arrest, have titles of honour and rank, and precedence in society. In short, what he dreaded was a "democratic Parliament," which would be in its nature hostile to the great institutions of the country and the essential interests of "the society called the British Empire." What he failed to see was that a change was coming, if it had not come, over the nation, which made the representative machinery of 1830 incompatible with peaceful national life; that the pivot of power had at least begun to shift from land to trade, commerce, and industry, and that the claim of these to share in power could not be denied. Nor is he to be blamed for that, still less for standing up steadfastly in defence of his convictions. "I feel no strength," he said, "excepting in my character for plain manly dealing;" and he could not pretend to say he approved of measures which he passed, or those he abstained from opposing, when he did not love them. He fought the sweeping Whig Reform Bill as long as he could; he tried to form a Government against it; he strove to modify, when he could not reject it; but he announced his intention of absenting himself from the House of Peers so soon as he saw that the national safety could only be preserved by the passing of the Bill. Then he frankly accepted it as the law of the land, and hoped that the inevitable changes would be brought about so slowly as to mitigate their effects.

He has been soundly rated for half a century because he made an imprudent declaration against a special measure of reform. It is a testimony to his worth, and his candour should have been appreciated; but simplicity, frankness, and plain manly dealing do

not serve the interests of political parties or leaders of parties. The Duke, as it seems to us, was not, by his character, fitted for the work which they perform; he was never a mere party man or party leader—he was always the devoted servant of the Crown and the State; and the really astonishing thing is that he remained in office for nearly three years. Nothing but his high character kept him there; and it was his high character which finally expelled him. He belonged to the pre-democratic era, just going below the horizon in 1832. He did not quail before the multitude, nor mistake the quality of their cheers or groans. When Apsley House was threatened he was prepared to defend it by force; when the windows were broken he put up iron shutters and never took them down; nor did he ever fail to point to them on occasions, when crowds saluted him with hurrahs. He was beset by a furious mob on the anniversary of Waterloo in 1832, when riding home from the Mint, and owed his life, perhaps, to the accident that he had an appointment in Lincoln's Inn, where the lawyers gallantly provided for his safety. The incident is ever-memorable as a shining example of popular fickleness and folly. One can imagine the scene as he rode at a walking pace out of the Inn, through the howling mob, pale, but with a severe countenance, immovable on his saddle, and looking straight before him, Sir Edward Sugden and another barrister forming the advance guard in this striking procession. Yet at this very moment the Reform Bill had become the Reform Act, and its final passage through the House of Lords was really effected by the prudence and wisdom of the man so bitterly assailed and outraged. But all

mobs behave alike when under the influence of ignorance and passion, whether clad in broadcloth or fustian; and none knew that better than the Duke, who never allowed either to drive him from the course marked out for him by his sense of duty. That he could and did put aside his personal convictions for the common good is true, but to physical threats and the imminence of personal danger he never yielded one jot. The story of the Reform Bill is now ancient history, yet no generous mind can study it without recognising the honourable and manly conduct of a statesman whose first and last thought was for his country, and never for himself.

That is why, with a standpoint so different, party men, who wanted to and did admire him, could never quite understand or calculate his course. The political crisis in the winter of 1834-35—which was preceded by that somewhat astonishing incident, the selection of the Duke as Chancellor of the University of Oxford—affords another illustration. The first Government of Lord Melbourne, from the action of causes to which we cannot even allude, suddenly disappeared one November morning. The Duke was at Strathfieldsaye, and was just going out hunting when a king's messenger arrived from Brighton at six in the morning bearing a summons from King William. Thither the Duke hastened at once, and when the King told him that he had no Ministry, he at once recommended his Majesty to send for Sir Robert Peel, and as Sir Robert was in Italy, the Duke offered to carry on the Government until the wandering statesman reached England. The King assented, and the Duke was immediately appointed First Lord of the

Treasury, and sworn in as Secretary of State for the Home Department, which enabled him to act in all the other offices. Nothing could be more astounding to the ordinary party mind, except the promptitude with which a man who always went straight for the thing to be done entered on his collective functions. The same day, November 17th, he went direct to the Home Office, did business, looked in at the other offices, and assumed his place, making no changes, but doing the work to be done. Sir Robert was summoned home by express, and, despite the wishes of the King, no appointment was made until he arrived. Thus to the astonishment, amusement, and admiration of the public, the Duke for three weeks conducted what he laughingly called his Dictatorship, in complete accordance with the constitution. He fixed his head-quarters at the Home Office, and thence sallied forth to perform his functions in the others. Sir Erskine May regards the expedient as one of a "doubtful and anomalous character," adding that "as the Duke had exercised the extraordinary powers entrusted to him with honour and good faith," he was not subjected to parliamentary censure, even at a time when the temper of the House of Commons was so inflamed. In short, the Duke spoke truly when he said that he had not disposed of a single office, nor done any act "not essentially necessary for the service of the King and the country." It was a novel experience for the parties who divided the State, and certainly raised the Duke in general estimation. If they did not understand the motive which actuated him as a public servant, they appreciated the courage of the man who took all the responsibility and none of the patronage;

who suddenly found the King without a Government, and at once supplied one in his own person.

Peel returned to London in December; and, forming a Ministry in the usual way, gave the Foreign Office to the Duke. Parliament was dissolved, but the appeal to the country did no more than reinforce the Conservatives, who, beaten on successive divisions, resigned in April. The Duke's share in the labours of this brief administration is remarkable for two things. It was necessary to appoint a new ambassador to St. Petersburg, and the Duke selected Lord Londonderry. He never even started for his post; so huge an uproar was raised in and out of Parliament by the Opposition that he retired. It was a pure bit of party fighting, and had nothing to do with the sole thing that animated the Minister in selecting him—his fitness. Mr. Greville, reporting the Duke's conversation at the time, has this significant entry: "He said he was not particularly partial to the man, nor ever had been; but that he was very fit for the post, was an excellent ambassador, procured more information and obtained more insight into the affairs of a foreign court than anybody, and that he was the best relater of what passed at a conference, and wrote the best account of a conversation of any man he knew." So that the fit man was sacrificed to party animosity and nothing else. It will be seen that in making this selection, imprudent from a party point of view, because it gave the Opposition a pretext, the error of the Duke consisted in looking about for the man best fitted to do the work of an ambassador, which one might have supposed was precisely the duty of a foreign secretary. But the Duke never could be got

to regulate his conduct on the curious and artificial rules of the politician, who is bound to think first of himself and his party. The other incident of his Ministry redounded to his honour in a different way. The horrible cruelties practised by each side in the Carlist wars moved him to despatch Lord Eliot to Spain with instructions to bring both within the area of civilisation. He was successful in his efforts, the slaughter of prisoners was stayed, and their treatment regulated by the Eliot Convention. It did not long endure, but it was an attempt to make civil war humane, and deserved a longer sway.

Although the Duke of Wellington was included in the Cabinet formed by Peel in 1841 and 1846, he never again held any political office. His function was to lead in the House of Lords, and holding that position he so acted as to moderate opposition, and help the Ministers whenever he could. He has himself, in a letter to Lord Stanley (1846) when pressing him to assume the leadership, described the principles on which he conducted his management of the Upper House for twenty years. He objected to all extreme and violent measures of opposition; supported the Government on important occasions, used his influence "to prevent the mischief of anything like a difference or division between the two Houses": he endeavoured to guide, and did guide, opinion in the Peers, and induced them to do what he thought best for the Crown, the Constitution, and the country. His last political service was in joining Sir Robert Peel to abolish the Corn Laws—much against his personal wish; and when that dangerous question came to a head, he wrote a letter to the Queen, severing

his connection with the Conservative party, which made him anxious that Lord Stanley should take his place and do as he had done. "It is impossible," he writes, "for me to do otherwise than is indicated in my letter to the Queen. I am the servant of the Crown and people. I have been paid and rewarded, and consider myself retained; and that I can't do otherwise than serve as required, when I can do so without dishonour, that is to say, as long as I have health and strength to enable me to serve."

The principle which determined his course in 1845-46 was one now familiar to us from him. The question to be considered when Sir Robert Peel undertook to do what Lord John Russell would not attempt, he said, was "not what the Corn Laws should be, but whether the Queen should have a Government"; or as he told Croker, "the position he had taken up was not on the Corn Law—his object was to maintain a Government in the country." That position after long years came to be well understood by the public, and the knowledge of it finally extinguished every idea that the Duke was a High Tory, or even a party man, a dictator, or a mere soldier. He was, in his political, as well as in his military character, pre-eminently a great national servant, always intent on promoting what according to his cool judgment was best for the common weal.

CHAPTER XI

OLD AGE

"If the Duke of Wellington were twenty or thirty years younger, he ought to be on horseback and on the field with Runjeet Sing, instead of being called in to arrange the affairs of maids of honour and the palace," was his remark to Lord Stanhope in March 1839. Two years later, George Broadfoot, shut up in Jellalabad, wrote, "Set the Duke down at Ferozepore with *carte blanche;* both contempt of the enemy and timidity would disappear, and Afghanistan would soon be our own to keep or abandon." The dream of the valiant young soldier, of course, could not be realised; his hero was, and felt himself to be, too old. His deafness, the result of improper treatment, became yearly worse, and he had suffered from those severe attacks of illness which made O'Connell chuckle over the thought that one of whom he was always afraid would soon die. The death of Lord Hill in 1842 made Wellington Commander-in-Chief, by patent and for life. All remember how, when the news of Chillianwallah filled men with dismay, asked to submit three names to the Government as fit successors to Sir Hugh Gough, he wrote down thrice, "Sir Charles Napier." Still more does it dwell in the memory

that he fixed the resolution of Sir Charles by saying, "If you will not go, I must." That was an appeal which could not be withstood. Later still, the old fire blazed up when he undertook to thwart the Chartists on April 10th, 1848, and kept his word so well, and made such solid arrangements, that tranquillity was preserved without showing a soldier or firing a shot. "Well, Duke, it has all turned out as you foretold," said Sir John Campbell. "Oh yes," was the reply, "I was sure of it, and I never showed a soldier or musket. But I was ready. I could have stopped them wherever you liked, and if they had been armed it would have been all the same." That was his last military triumph, and he was pardonably elated at its bloodless success.

Few living can remember him as he was in the prime of his manhood, but many cherish the recollection of the silver-haired veteran, wearing a blue coat and white waistcoat and trousers, riding or walking through the streets, or painfully listening, with one hand to his best ear, in the House of Lords. Age slowly sapped his strength. Music, which he so loved, was lost to him: he had to give up his hunting; but he rose early, worked as of old, and neglected no duty. If he became irritable and had his quick temper less under control, that was due to failing powers, and he was painfully conscious of the weakness. It was only trifles that moved him: on grave subjects he was patient and ready to bear with opposition all his life; but no man is so privileged as to escape human infirmity. The publication of his despatches by Colonel Gurwood raised him immensely in public estimation, and he was seen as he was for the first time. One might say that, despite the splendour

of his active military career, and the enthusiasm it aroused, men did not come to know him truly until he had grown old, and then admiration passed into a sort of reverence which shed a halo over his declining years. Baron Stockmar having said that he was "one-sided," Prince Albert answered, "He is a fresh illustration of the truth that, to achieve great results and do great deeds, a certain one-sidedness is essential." Certainly, it is better to be a Wellington than a Hamlet. The nation agreed with Queen Victoria when she said, "He was the pride and the genius, as it were, of the country." How true the phrase is, was shown when his startling letter to Sir John Burgoyne was printed. From his watch-tower at Walmer he looked around, saw that the South of England was defenceless, and said so in plain terms. The nation was electrified, and from that day in 1848 may be dated the modern measures for the defence of our coast and the reinforcement of our army. The warning came with triple energy from one who had been always a votary of real economy, and a fervid champion of peace. It was he who wrote in 1841, "May God preserve the general peace. Man will not if left to himself."

Throughout his life he was generous and gave without stint. His conduct towards Alava affords a conspicuous example. Even Cobbett, who called him an "old ruffian," found that the Duke was "not a *miser*." He carried loose sovereigns in his pocket to bestow on any of his old soldiers in distress. When General Brenier, captured at Vimiero, was a prisoner, Sir Arthur, as he then was, lent the Frenchman five hundred pounds, which were never repaid. He was absolutely unostentatious in giving. Mr. Gleig once saw a private record

of his charities which in one year reached four thousand pounds. He was the cheerful victim of impostors and even delinquents, saying when rebuked, "What could I do? One could not let the man starve." His kind-heartedness came out in many ways. Seeing a short gentleman, on one occasion at Court, straining every joint to obtain a glimpse of the Queen, he placed him before himself, and the little man was so delighted that he asked for a living. At a review in the Champ de Mars, he befriended a small boy by mounting him on the back of his own chair. Obliged to join the French Princes, the Duke consigned the boy to the care of his father, and a few days afterwards the father applied for a loan. Such experiences never narrowed his sympathies. His kindness to children is well known. Georgina, Dowager Lady de Ros, has told us how he romped with the children, and allowed his young guests at Walmer to fight the battle of Waterloo with him, a conflict which began by one of them flinging a cushion at the newspaper he was reading; and how indignant he was when he saw that his little favourites had no jam with their bread and butter. But the prettiest story is told by Lord Stanhope. Two tiny guests at Walmer, seeing that every one received letters by post, wished that they might have some. Thereupon the Duke wrote a little letter to each every morning, and had it delivered to them when the post arrived. It was a different feeling, indeed a sense of justice, which made him, as Constable of the Tower, give to non-commissioned officers the post of Yeoman Warder. Preceding Constables, following an old usage, had sold them.

One of his latest acts was a serious proposal that the

Prince Consort should command the army through a Chief of the Staff—an obvious error, which the Prince had the prudence to set aside. In the year when it was made, 1850, a little prince was born on May 1st, the Duke's birthday. The name of Arthur was bestowed on him, and King William of Prussia and the Duke were the sponsors. The next year, at the opening of the first Exhibition, as the Queen records, "the old Duke and Anglesey walked arm in arm in the procession, which was a touching sight." Another year passed, and then the Duke faded peacefully away at Walmer, in September, and after lying in state at Chelsea Hospital, was solemnly buried by the side of Nelson in St. Paul's Cathedral. All the nations in Europe, except Austria, were represented at his grave; and as the organ-peals ceased and the mighty multitude separated, the whole world felt not only that an epoch had visibly ended, but that a great captain and a supremely dutiful, honest man, leaving behind him a stainless record, had gone from among them for ever.

THE END

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